

flourished in his age. It deals, to a marvellous degree, and one uncommon today, with observable facts, with the infinite details of the natural order. It is Theophrastus in his care for order (I wish Meiggs had spent more space on Theophrastus rather than devoting page after page to correcting the Grub Street errors of that old *farceur* the Elder Pliny), and in its avoidance of over-speculative generalization. We learn about Esarhaddon's sumptuous building programme, and Nebuchadnezzar's special road for the transportation of cedars. Meiggs tells us, almost in an aside, that Sir Arthur Evans was wrong. Crete had no timber shortage in the Minoan period, the use of gypsum for door-lintels was dictated by fashion rather than necessity and Crete went on exporting cypress for centuries. Homer's tree-cutting similes are analysed from a new angle. Why were the Greek trimmers slower at Salamis? Because the Athenian crash building programme had to use unseasoned timber in the emergency. Facts and figures.

Meiggs divides his book into holdall chapters with titles such as "Forests and Fleets", "Timbers for Armies", "Athenian Timber Supplies", "Farms, Parks and Gardens", or "The Timber Trade". He discusses furniture, sculpture in wood (phased out except in special cases by the fifth century BC) and the ecology of Mediterranean forests. He has detailed appendices on such topics as pitch, the forests of South Italy, and temple commissioners' accounts. His plates are illustrative in every sense (cedars of Lebanon, yew, but also the wood-lined Midas tomb of Gordium, a wooden bowl from the Samian Heraeum, and some fascinating details from Trajan's Column). At times, the relentless avalanche of discrete detail becomes overwhelming: there are passages where it really is hard to tell the wood from the trees. But that, of course, is one hazard of trail-blazing: Meiggs clearly sees it as

his prime duty to assemble all the available evidence, and this he has done in the most exemplary fashion. If you want to know the price of a boxwood bed in third-century Rome, the length of a parade float in Ptolemy Philadelphus's great procession, or the identity of the emperor who made his money in timber (600 denarii, 37½ feet and Pericles, respectively), this is where to look.

Where one would have liked more detail, in particular over foreign trade, the answer, more often than not, is that the evidence simply doesn't exist, and Meiggs - unlike some of his professional colleagues - refuses to speculate on a basis of inadequate fact. Oddly, for a historian of the Athenian Empire, he seems not altogether familiar with the evidence for the hauling of marble and timber during the building of the Parthenon: he does not appear to know either A. G. Drachmann's *Mechanical Technology of Greek and Roman Antiquity* (Copenhagen, 1963) or T. Leslie Shear's remarkable dissertation on the Periclean building programme, and though he cites A. K. Orlandos, he still sounds a little astonished at the number of oxen needed to haul heavy loads. Also, though he is well aware that Theophrastus lists South Italy as one of the few major foreign sources for imported timber, and indeed argues, surely correctly, that this was where Athens (banned at the time, in all likelihood, from officially pro-Persian Macedonia) obtained the lumber for her Salamis fleet in 480, he does not suggest (what is surely obvious, that one major reason for the Sicilian Expedition of 415 was to secure a controllable source of timber (and, *a fortiori*), grain, since Macedonia was so perilously unreliable).

Such moments of doubt, however, are few and far between. Some archaeological and forestry experts are, it is true, complaining that Meiggs is not fully acquainted with the latest

technical developments in the field. This is probably inevitable, and not of prime importance when set against the collection and sane evaluation of an enormous mass of scattered and intractable evidence. (There is also one small, but to an ex-resident infuriating, aberration that Meiggs shares with many other English-speaking classicists: why does he insist on writing about "the Piraeus"? Piraeus is the non-functional name of a city: it is not a disguised description like Le Havre. Would Meiggs write about "the Liverpool" or "the Calveston"?)

It is hard to convey the sheer pleasure derived from reading a book of this sort: the intellectual appreciation of rigorous research and carefully controlled conclusions, the sympathetic excitement aroused by a scholar so patently in love with his subject and - always I come back to this - the splendid treasure-trove of factual nuggets that Meiggs has garnered: that Parnes was still forested in Pausanias's day; that the Athenian general Timotheus was prosecuted for allegedly applying to his own private house a load of Macedonian timber that Meiggs calculates as sufficient to build ten trimmers; that the Minoans used five-foot cross-saws; that timber-felling in antiquity was restricted not only to certain seasons of the year, which is reasonable, but also to certain phases of the moon; that spring-symphs were especially partial to dedications in wood; that the wood-turning lathe "was to have an appalling influence on the design of table-legs"; that in one year in the fourth century BC Athens burnt up twelve tons of sacrificial logs. The list could go on *ad infinitum*. Everyone who touches this subject in future will have to begin from Meiggs, as the ancient poet from Zeus. He has laid the groundwork, and it is sound: solid, scholarly, paragon, proof, I would judge, against rot, worm and time.

In the Raj

He was a tight-lipped devil and a rigorous Company sergeant-major, I recall Under the sweaty sky of Barrackpore, Where all was sweat, where clothes were never dry

And Bengal rot started between our toes. The sun of Asia! So it seemed to us And the dead rotting by the Ganges shore Where melons grow huge but taste of nothing

And the poor lie all day upon the streets While the exquisite Brahmin minces by. The air-conditioned and American Left us to treason and the Queen's red-coats.

Quiet and moderate men, you might say, Shipped out there, packaged, waiting for our turn And doing nothing with expiring hope But drive the kites off from our stinking food.

C.S.M. Birt was adept at all this, Long enough resident to have prepared His own devices for a happy life Or, if not happy, one he could control.

It came first like a rumour in the dark, Then in the sun, that something was amiss: The C.S.M. glowered and said less And what the sepoy said I do not know.

I was elsewhere, a thousand miles away, When an explicit story reached my ears. C.S.M. Birt had been under arrest, Then court-martialled. What the swine had done

Was to sell army pistols in the bazaar. So far, there was only curiosity. But then the tale came out. One night the guard Of Indian Other Ranks had turned out

While Birt said he would check the weapon stores. He took the pistols and accused the guard - Such turpitude behind those foxy eyes Which seemed dishonest, abject is what they were.

It was some two years later I saw Birt And at a depot far from Barrackpore. With three stripes on my arm I stood outside The sergeants' mess and Birt came slinking past,

Abashed, silent, shorn of his insolence, Looking at no one and his face was dead, The first day out of gaol, a cowed man Waiting a posting where he was not known.

Different was Curly, now inside the mess: A rough, soft-spoken man, I do not know What his crime had been when, years before, He had done time in a military prison,

Running in circles in the blazing sun. The N.C.O. in charge threw boxing-gloves And any man they hit must fight with him, A bruiser with a pair of bruising gloves.

'Never no more,' Curly would say, 'never no more, They won't get me again, happen what may.' He drew a long breath and turned aside Into the racket of the gramophones.

It was a servile life, the only dream. Was white wings over the fucking cliff of Dover. Roll on that fucking boat. Get up them stairs. And some of the fucking officers was shits.

But one especially, as I remember, A jumped-up quarter-master, regular, Who wired a hut to spy upon the men. It was a round-faced corporal who refused

To obey orders while the wires were there And in a flash was put behind bars. While sympathetic mates did guard outside. I do not know the end of that story

Except that two days later he was out. The wires dismantled and the adjutant Putting the best face on it that he could. And I remember other men, six or seven

Years out from home, promised a break at last. Then told they could not go, whose passion would Have torn the camp up and yet nothing happened. So impatient was rage against that rule.

Ah servitude! We who have been in chains, Accepting bitterness for every day, Now walk as free as any men can be And know that every pleasure ends in death.

C. H. Sisson

Boy Wonder into bungler

Linda Colley

JOHN EHRLMAN

The Younger Pitt: Volume 2, The Reluctant Transition 689pp. Constable. £20. 0 09 464930 8

This is a massive, important and sometimes dull book written on a subject of great difficulty. At the age of thirteen the precocious William Pitt the Younger (who was never in his life either properly young or properly adult) composed a tragedy: "The plot is political", comments the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "and there is no love in it." So with the man himself and so, in particular, with this volume of John Ehrman's biography, which takes Pitt from the Ochakov affair of 1790 to the start of 1797. Here we are told that only a tiny circle of close friends were allowed to call Pitt by his surname. We are also told that we must wait until the third and final volume (the first appeared in 1970) for an account of Pitt's only serious but still abortive venture into romance. Titillation can go no further.

The problem is one of chronology as well as chronic reserve. The 1780s are traditionally Pitt's decade - his marvellous parliamentary debut, fiscal reformism and cool reformism heralding Britain's recovery from American defeat. After 1797, the advent of Napoleon and the threat of French invasion made Pitt the Churchill of his time, the pilot who weathered the storm "and this kingdom preserv'd amid the wreck of a world". Of course Pitt also preserved the kingdom's social, economic and religious inequities and its unreformed Parliament; nonetheless, the fortitude and lonely courage of this last stage of his life are beyond question. Small wonder, then, that his war speeches were reprinted in 1915, 1916 and again in 1940.

In contrast with this early and late

achievement, the years between 1790 and 1797 seem at best subdued, at worst a mess. The French Revolution is normally supposed to have changed Pitt from a domestic reformer into a spy-master, implementing draconian legislation against the Corresponding Societies and the radical press. After 1793 the exigencies of war demanded that he subsidize and ally with the more absolutist European dynasties as well as with the shabby, usually illiberal French royalist underground. The only thing that might have redeemed these manoeuvres was victory and that proved elusive.

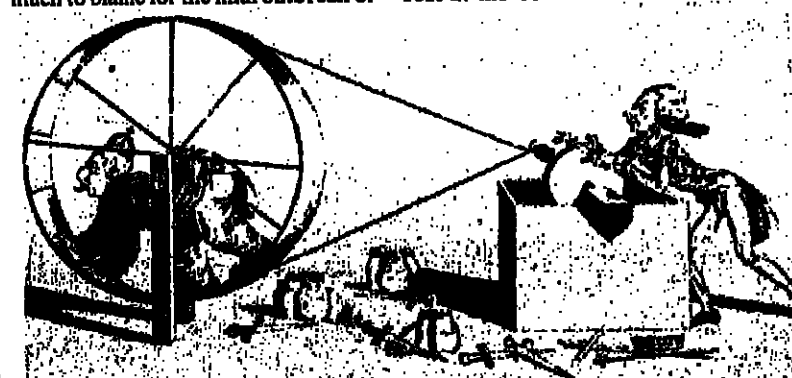
West Indies involvement in the feebleness and losses to the Royal Navy without doing serious damage to French colonial revenue. British military involvement in Flanders was a mire of forlorn and ill-informed endeavour. Britain's eight European allies distrusted and frequently let each other down so that by 1797 only Austria was left in the fight. The rest had been beaten by France or had joined her. Here, then, is Pitt neither as Boy Wonder nor as Babelian but as bungler. "He was at his feebleness and languor", denounced Macaulay, "... his military administration was that of a driver."

This view of Pitt's mid-life crisis is dissected and in part modified by John Ehrman's shrewd and highly detailed narrative. Clearly Pitt's transition from reformism to reactionary politics was uneven and prolonged. As early as 1787 he opposed the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts on the grounds of expediency, the same rationale which was later to underlie the punitive legislation of the 1790s. But there was no immediate post-Revolution clamp-down. Pitt supported Fox's Libel Bill and was widely suspected of favouring parliamentary reform as late as November 1792.

Nor was Pitt a Burkeian crusader for the Bourbon dynasty and the burnt-out beauty of Marie-Antoinette. Essentially a cold fish, he dismissed *Reflections on the Revolution in France* as "rhapsodies". Jacobin emotionalism

was even less congenial, but until the end of 1792 he endeavoured to maintain a chilling neutrality. Poor communications, the transience of French ministers and envoys and their refreshing but disconcerting penchant for "open diplomacy" were probably as much to blame for the final outbreak of

war as British high-political incomprehension and obduracy in the face of Louis XVI's trial and execution. Having reluctantly relinquished peace, Great War it was supposed to last one year at the most and could therefore be fought by short-term expedients. Given British insularity, prosperity and aversion to military service and tax reform, it seemed to make sense (at least initially) to subsidize foreign powers and the French Resistance to do the bulk of the fighting.



A French propaganda print put out by the newly established Republic; it shows Pitt humiliating George III in the course of sharpening the daggers intended to assassinate the defenders of liberty.

So far so good, but what about Pitt as the ogre of radical execution? What of Pitt as Gillray portrayed him in the bitter year of 1795, as the semblance of death riding the pale horse of Hanover roughshod over the starving, swinish multitude at home? Certainly Pitt hit Portland Whigs, many of them more conservative than he. Ehrman's chapter on this elite re-grouping, "The Defence of the Order," is one of the sedition and its weakest imitators very

his discussion of Pitt's own parliamentary bill of February 1797, which might have transformed the treatment of England's poor. Pitt wanted schools of industry, old-age and sickness benefits, parish obligations to relieve non-settled paupers, and - to the later horror of Malthusians - relief to be commensurate with the size of families.

The bill met with opposition; Pitt dropped it and never took it up again. And it is episodes like this which perhaps indicate the real lapse in his political performance in this period. He did not like to fail so was often loath to venture; he did not like to delegate and so overworked himself or let things slide; and increasingly he did not like to concentrate on the details of seemingly intractable business. As Ehrman concludes this book, "worse to come" after 1797; for Pitt himself, however, there would also be: posthumous victory and a personal apotheosis, hard-won, rather tarnished but finally beyond dispute.

Rumours of tyranny

T. P. Wiseman

Zvi Yavetz

Julius Caesar and his Public Image 286pp. Thames and Hudson. £15. 0 500 40043 1

Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon on January 10, 49 BC (by the old calendar). The campaigns of the civil war allowed him only very brief periods in Rome before his victorious return on July 25, 46 - and then the rebellion in Spain kept him occupied from November 46 to October 45. On March 15, 44 he was assassinated. The total time available to him for the work of political reconstruction everyone knew to be necessary was less than twelve months in all. His posthumously adopted son, Caesar Augustus, had forty-four years after his civil war was over, and successfully inaugurated the system of quasi-monarchy posterity knows as the Roman Empire. Which of them was the true author of the autocracy that made the surname Caesar an imperial title, eventually transmutated to Kaiser and Tsar?

The question of Caesar's final aims merges into another: why he was killed. What was it that drove twenty-three honourable men to commit bloody murder in the Senate House? They said he was a tyrant, but what did they mean? The dictatorship for life was un-republican enough, but was he also giving himself regal and divine status?

Zvi Yavetz's attack on these questions was first published in German in 1979, one of a series of monographs from the University of Tel Aviv's Institute for German History. Appropriately, therefore, he began with a discussion of the place of Caesar in German historical thought, and especially the idea of "Caesarism" in the nineteenth century. The readers of this very welcome English translation will find that a natural starting-point, but it will do them no harm to be jolted out of their natural idleness.

On the twentieth century's view of Caesar, Yavetz identifies three schools: idealists, who play down speculation about monarchical intentions and emphasize Caesar's place in the later republican political context; the Revisionists, who take

that there is contemporary evidence for the idea of divine kingship, encouraged and presumably calculated by Caesar; and the Sceptics, who recognize the inadequacy of the sources and are resigned to never being able to know what Caesar would or would not have done.

Where Yavetz himself stands is not immediately clear; throughout, his elliptical style makes the argument hard to follow. Building on the conclusions of his *Plebs and Princes* (1969), he emphasizes Caesar's determination to appear as the friend of the people;

Is that the true Caesar? I have never maintained so. I suppose there will be those who will say that my position is influenced by the conduct of those politicians in our age of mass media who are primarily interested in burnishing their personal image before the television cameras and the press. Such criticism would be justified.

Here, it seems (and as his title implies), is Yavetz's own contribution to the debate - "the quest for the image". But no sooner has it been introduced than we are whisked away into three detailed factual chapters on Caesar's legislation - interesting and valuable in themselves, but of very tenuous relevance to the theme he has announced. "It ought to be possible, by a thorough investigation of these laws and measures, to understand how Caesar was assessed by different sections of the public"; but when the investigation is finished a hundred pages later, the author seems to have forgotten why he was making it. What he offers now is an "interim statement" on the nature of Caesar's rule, merging into a "comprehensive analysis" of the legislation which concludes that no one interest-group specially benefited, or specially suffered. "That was the line of policy that was woven like a golden thread through all his dealings: damage was balanced by compensation". All right, but what happened to the public image?

That comes back in the last chapter, to explain why the man who got something to everybody ended up murdered. Here Yavetz seems to have joined the Sceptics: "We have no clues as to why... It is difficult to explain the truth... It remains an open question... the truth will never be clearly established... we shall never learn the truth... It is wiser to leave the

question open... It is idle to look for a formula... we shall never be able to clearly interpret... we shall never discover the reasons... one guess is as good as another". But now the rabbit reappears from the hat. After the last of these expressions of agnosticism, Yavetz goes on:

Using an analogy from our own times, examine the slurs that political candidates cast on their opponents via radio and television. Consider how an accidental comment made in the presence of journalists can ruin a politician's future, and how a wave of rumours can cause irreparable damage. There is nothing new under the sun.

Excuse me, but there is. Radio, television and journalists are all new under the sun since 44 BC. The image-making of modern political life is dependent on the mass media. It is true - and Yavetz documents the fact in his appendix, a reprinted 1974 article - that a Roman statesman's reputation (*existimatio*) was of the greatest political importance to him, and could be damaged by rumour and malicious gossip. But it is not true that "propaganda means in antiquity were basically similar" to modern mass media and public relations. If you look hard at Yavetz's argument, you can find implied there - though not spelt out - the means by which he imagines Caesar's ill-wishers spread their damaging picture of him as a tyrant: many plebeians were dependants of the great aristocratic houses, and the contents of political pamphlets written for the literate elite must have been disseminated by them among the common people. But a pep-talk by Brutus to his *clientes* is so utterly different in scale and effect from a smear campaign in a mass-circulation newspaper that the analogy is more misleading than helpful.

Of course Caesar was killed because he was thought to be a tyrant; but was he, and if so, in what sense? The fundamental questions remain unanswered. "His performance and achievements made restoration of the old Republic impossible once and for all. Whether all this was planned or brought about accidentally matters little." A disappointingly lame conclusion to a book which is frequently informative and thought-provoking, but never quite adds up to a coherent whole.

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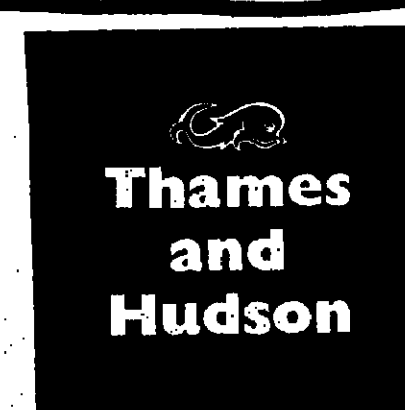
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The Ophelia of the King's Road

John Stokes

ANNE CLARK AMOR

Mrs Oscar Wilde: A Woman of Some Importance
249pp. Sidgwick and Jackson. £8.95.
0 283 98967 X

JOYCE BENTLEY

The Importance of Being Constance
160pp. Hale. £8.75.
0 7090 0538 5

One of the pleasures of Peter Ackroyd's recent novel, *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde*, is that it allows the earnest Wildean to relax with hypotheses. Ackroyd even manages to exonerate those critics who have strained to find a new and more acceptable face for Lord Alfred Douglas. (Two we have always known: one beautifully plain, the other, like Dorian's portrait, plain nasty.) "Boise never betrayed me," admits this Wilde, "I betrayed him." Yet Wilde's wife, Constance, eludes even a novelist's imagination, remaining as opaque as in the authentic memoirs. According to Ackroyd, when his friends asked Wilde why he married her, he would reply that "it was merely to find out what she thought of me." Louise Jopling, a family friend, reports a curious alternative reason: She scarcely ever speaks. I am always wondering what her thoughts are like. There could be no clearer indication of the problems encountered by a would-be biographer of Constance than her own husband's rapt contemplation of her reticence.

Even so, the discovery that her silence was not absolute must have encouraged both Joyce Bentley and Anne Clark Amor in their simultaneous endeavours to release another woman from the imprisoning male view. Constance Wilde wrote a certain amount of journalism (rather more than either biographer has managed to trace), her stray remarks were collected by several contemporaries, and portions of her correspondence have survived. She was active in society, and in her enthusiasm for dress reform, theology, and astrology showed herself to be no sister than many of her male peers, including her husband.

While a historical fiction such as Ackroyd's affords its readers the legitimate indulgence of matching invention to the written record, biography necessarily impels the sterner discipline of retrieving whatever facts there are from unwarranted speculation. This becomes an essential duty when the biographer has a penchant for mind-reading. Ms. Amor has Constance, in 1886, ignorant of Robert Ross's true nature, and even in the summer of 1893 oblivious to the real relationship between Oscar and Boise. She concludes that "homo-

sexuality was the last thing in the world of which she was likely to suspect him," and declines to pinpoint the moment of revelation. Ms Bentley, altogether more reckless, turns novelistic on the issue. She imagines Constance on the beach at Worthing in 1894 brooding beneath her parasol, "How long had it been going on? . . . A procession of disciples passed before her bewildered eyes, beginning with Robbie Ross. A hundred little pieces must have clicked into place . . . She has to wonder how far it had gone. Kisses? Caresses?"

Well might one wonder at what Constance didn't know. Was it simply what every woman didn't know? If the legend of Queen Victoria's innocence about lesbianism is anything to go by, there were certainly some things that some women didn't know. Or was it rather that, as the popular wisdom goes, the wife was the last to know? Can we assume that when Wilde married the beautiful daughter of a Dublin lawyer in 1884, even he knew the extent of his sexual attraction to men?

The question of when Wilde became an active homosexual has always worried his biographers. Some have been content to believe that the seeds lay quiet dormant until the famous seduction by Ross in 1886; but that is psychologically and historically unlikely. In the late nineteenth century homosexuality was visible yet silent, prominent yet invisible. Given the state of the law and general opprobrium, the word was as important as the deed. If we can speak of a Uranian movement – and the researches of Brian Reade, Timothy d'Arch Smith and Jeffrey Weeks prove that we can – then it is certain that Wilde, an early admirer of Pater and Symonds, had always known its language. One or two letters to his Oxford friend William Ward in 1876 clearly suggest moral unease about the limits of proper conduct, and the physical aspects of male friendship were a common theme in Wilde's Oxford.

Only a year after he had come down from the university, the *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduate's Journal* was protesting against the publication of *Boy Worship*, a pamphlet in defence of homosexual, or at least homo-erotic, behaviour, whose anonymous author indicated his predilections in the already established terms of Aesthetics: "the outcome of artistic and aesthetic temperament," "the capacity for worship," "attractability." The ensuing correspondence in this undergraduate newspaper contains powerful foreshadowings of what was to come. The love "passing the love of women" has outlived David and Jonathan, runs one letter, "and exists in the full tide of its beauty even here in Oxford." There, ready made, are the noble clichés that Wilde was to incorporate in his famous outburst:

from the dock during his second trial in 1895: "The love that dare not speak its name" in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between David and Jonathan. . . it is beautiful, it is fine." A letter from "Common Sense" exhibits what may have already become another cliché. "Ugly boys need not be kept at a distance . . . if a boy has red hair, a snub nose, thick lips, goggle eyes, and repulsive features, I see no reason why a man, even of exceptional disposition and freethinking views, should not take him into close friendship." It is impossible, on reading that, not to recall Wilde's first and fatal slip in reply to Carson's "insolent" question, "Did you ever kiss him?" "Oh, dear no! He was a peculiarly plain boy. He was, unfortunately, extremely ugly."

Boy Worship was a minor and quickly suppressed scandal but, significantly, it took place only three years after Pater's prudent decision to omit the "Conclusion" from the second edition of *Studies in the Renaissance* and his mysterious withdrawal from the election to the Professorship of Poetry. According to another correspondent to the *Oxford and Cambridge Undergraduate's Journal*, "The enemy is coming in like a flood." If readers wished to know what "the vice of the age" could lead to, they had "only to go to Folly or Magdalen Bridge and keep their eyes open."

It is insufficient for Bentley to insist that whereas in 1886 Ross was homosexual, "as yet, Oscar was not." Ross's attractions, Constance's domesticity, the possible recurrence of a syphilitic complaint caught from an Oxford prostitute, these were the accidental rather than the material causes of changing directions in Wilde's sexual life. The aphoristic story has been authoritatively endorsed by H. Montgomery Hyde, who draws upon Shenard and Ross, while Wilde confesses in the most intimate of letters to his mistress of tears to those almond-skinned eyes but, Madonna-like, bestows forgiveness. Amor, characteristically brisk, dismisses the whole matter as medically impossible. In any case, the infection could only have been a symptom. Wilde, we should assume, had always been in some part homosexual, in some, probably lesser part, heterosexual.

Still, the questions linger. Why didn't Constance know what Oscar knew? That of course is something we shall never know. We do know that they had for a time "a happy marriage," and both enjoyed the two children that were born to them. Yeats recalls the Wilde household as being like "some deliberate artistic composition," but it seems at first to have been more like a play. They shared a love of costume; and

Constance, though she had no histrionic talent, knew something about role-playing too. Louise Jopling tells how they strode down the King's Road one Sunday morning, he in a brown suit like "a glorified page's costume", she in "a large picture hat with beautiful white feathers adorning it". They attracted a group of urchins, one of whom called "amlet and Ophelia out for a walk, I suppose!" To which Wilde replied, "My little fellow, you are quite right. We are!" Or so they were to become: Oscar, who masked vacillation in imitation of the Decadents' favourite hero; Constance, who came to resemble the sweet and morbid victim of a Pre-Raphaelite dream.

Jopling also reports Wilde murmuring, "If only I could be jealous of her!", as the radiant Constance passed by at a social gathering. It's said that in the company of friends Wilde spoke of his wife with unpleasant condescension. In Robert Hichens's satire *The Green Carnation* (1894), the Wilde figure, "Mr Amaranth", remarks to "Lord Reggie" that his wife is a good woman who wears large hats:

"Why do good women invariably wear large hats? To show that they have large hearts?" Richard Ellmann rightly believes that *The Green Carnation* is less parody than "near-documentary", but on this subject Amaranth's sentiments seem too callous to be convincing. Isn't this the kind of thing that homosexuals are supposed, by those who know no better, to say about women? When Constance compiled a selection of her husband's epigrams under the title of *Oscariana* in 1895, she included many observations on women and marriage. While hardly to our tastes ("Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly"), even Lord Henry Wotton's aspersions display an appreciative elegance quite different from the vulgarity attributed to Wilde by his enemies. Douglas said – it was one of the few topics on which he was consistent – that he got on well with Constance and that she liked him better than any of Oscar's other friends.

From Wilde's imprisonment onwards, the dealings between husband and wife were marked by a meanness born of misunderstanding and bursts of irrepressible generosity. For came first, various practical questions second. In February 1896, she travelled from Geneva to Reading to break the news of the death of Oscar's mother, the wonderful "Sparanza" they both adored. Financial wrangles began soon after, when Wilde's solicitors, contravening his instructions that Constance should have the marriage settlement, attempted to buy the interest on his behalf. Amor claims that this move "alienated Constance completely and led her to raise again the issue of a divorce", while Bentley

thinks that "she was worried because if her husband heard she was going to divorce, which she was not, would he think?" Amor finds it believable that if Constance had been waiting at the gates and he accompanied her husband into jail, the marriage might have been saved but, as this suggestion was also made by Douglas in one of his later books, should perhaps be disqualified. I certainly overlooks *De Profundis*, where Wilde's bitterness towards Douglas can be read as evidence of continuing obsession. Whatever the possibilities of reconciliation, Constance did what Victorian outcasts and her advisers required: she was to "protect the children". The condemnation of homosexuality after all have a triple foundation: the time: crime, "disease", and the Few, including Constance, could dispute that Wilde had paid for his crime; the "disease" aspect may have been more difficult for her than it was for him; as for the sin, Wilde was prepared to confess to many, he homosexuality was not among them.

Both biographers agree that the Wilde set up home with Douglas in Naples in 1897, something which Constance briefly stopped in allowance and, perhaps for the first time, gave in to violent feelings writing in a letter, "I have lately forgiven me an absolute repulsion to him." If this at last was sexual jealousy, then it was human, rather more so than Oscar's own vaunting riposte that his lover was "well bred and well born."

When Constance visited Oscar in gaol, she wanted, she said, "to look him again". "If we had only met once, and kissed each other", she said, "she died in 1898 from a spinal injury, aged forty. Less than a year later I visited her grave in the Campo Santo at Genoa, uncontrollably sobbing, with my roses." "Ah, yes! Love did!" exclaims Mercedes. "Modern Love!" "I never thought it less." We have learned at last to acknowledge the affair between Oscar and Boise as one of the great romances of the nineteenth century; it should not be at the expense of the feeling between Oscar and his wife.

Despite her reliance on Hyde, it is to be said that Bentley's book is full of bewildering carelessness. Where she picked up the idea that Wilde met Ruskin it is impossible to tell. Moreover, she is cavalier about spelling, eschews footnotes and provides a risible bibliography. Amor manages better. Her use of the Wilde Collection at the Clark Library in Los Angeles and, unlike Bentley, doesn't hesitate to quote to good effect from Wilde himself. Her book is often intelligent and comparatively thorough, but for those expecting ultimate answers it, too, will necessarily be a disappointment.

The only truly distinguished writer of the late Ming dynasty whom the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci got to know well was Li Zhi. They met at various dinner parties in Nanjing during the late 1590s, and again in Shandong province during 1600, as Ricci was en route to Beijing. Li Zhi, normally cantankerous and sardonic about the achievements of his own contemporaries, wrote to friends that Ricci was an exceptional figure, with a true integrity and independence of mind. Ricci in turn found Li sympathetic to his Christian message and deeply interested by the glimpse of classical ethical beliefs – drawn from Seneca, Cicero and Martial among others – that Ricci had presented in his book on friendship. When Ricci heard that Li Zhi, imprisoned by his political enemies and threatened with charges of destruction of all his writings, had cut his throat in his cell, he was truly shocked. One can indeed argue that nothing else in the famous Jesuit's writings has quite the poignancy of the brief obituary and assessment of Li that he wrote in his *Historia*.

This crisis of the Chinese writer confronted by jealous colleagues, whose charges are reinforced by an unsympathetic state apparatus, has been a recurrent one over the last four hundred years. (Some scholars might argue that it has been recurrent since the period of the Warring States, in the fifth century BC.) Western visitors have often been, like Ricci, appalled but ineffective observers of these tragedies and have wondered, with various degrees of acuity, why the Chinese could not be more tolerant.

Used as we are to the realities of censorship and literary persecution in different times and realms all over the globe, the consistency of the Chinese pattern is startling – and initially all the more baffling because we think of Chinese society as a world dominated by intellectuals, giving the highest possible weight to education, and revering a rich and complex literary and artistic tradition with an unparalleled sophistication. As one surveys the last few centuries of the Chinese writers' world, one begins to see how the intimate involvement of those writers with political power has led repeatedly to their downfall.

Li Zhi's enemies within the Confucian elite had charged that his eccentric combination of intellectual scepticism and Buddhist belief

contributed to the moral collapse of the age, a charge that found a receptive ear in a court that must have sensed – however dimly – that its own combination of imperial withdrawal, eunuch dominance, financial incompetence and internecine factionalism was hardly conducive to strength in government. But in the years between Li Zhi's suicide and the fall of the Ming dynasty in 1644 the infighting within the ranks of the Confucian elite itself grew ever more strident, so that in retrospect it seems to have been one of the factors that helped snuff out the amazingly productive trends that were emerging in the late sixteenth century in a host of fields, but most especially in those of the short story, the novel and the drama. If all three of these genres had drawn sustenance from the energy and volatility (and immorality) of late sixteenth-century Chinese urban life, they were all susceptible to charges of being destructive of traditional values by the ways in which they introduced ideas of raw emotion, and the complexity with which they explored the ambiguity of social relations.

The dominant values spoke for social hierarchy, and the restraint of emotions within that hierarchy, and it was probably China's loss that the Manchus, whose regime established itself after 1644, saw themselves as the defenders of these Confucian attitudes, and did so with all the greater tenacity for being aware of their origins as northern barbarians, outside the pale of Chinese civilization until they took over the perquisites of power and culture represented by residence in the Forbidden City itself. The Manchus found speedily that in the scramble for bureaucratic office, their Chinese subjects constantly, the tactics of intellectual misrepresentation of their rivals, and to invoke the claims of orthodoxy whenever they felt threatened. Thus while many powerful intellectuals who had grown up in the last years of the Ming blamed the Confucian-Buddhist syncretism for that dynasty's fall even as they themselves refused, out of "loyalty" to their deceased emperor, to serve the Manchus, so did others take the logical corollary of that stance and use their office to enforce a more limited interpretation of the classical Confucian canon which they hoped would purge it of such syncretic elements. In the process, even during the long Kangxi reign of 1661 to 1722

when Jesuit mathematicians and scientists were quite prominent at court, there was no broadly-based intellectual follow-up of their ideas; at the same time, partly in reaction to very real Ming dynasty excesses, a new prudery combined with philosophical caution to inhibit the development of the newer artistic genres. This is not to deny some real artistic triumphs in the earlier Qing dynasty (which lasted from 1644 to 1912), such as the short



Detail from "Ideal Portrait of the Poet Li Tai-po" by Liang Kai (National Museum, Tokyo). Reproduced from Oswald Siren's *Chinese Painting: Leading Masters and Principles* (1956).

stories of Pu Songling, the plays of Kong Shangren, the novel *The Story of the Stone* by Cao Xueqin; but on the whole one must admit that none of these forms developed their potential, if we may define "potential" as comprising the kind of enrichment and sensibility that such genres underwent in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe.

The later eighteenth-century "literary incursion" of the emperor Qianlong – which recent research by young scholars in the United States is beginning to reveal as also steeped in ideological and localist decisions – made Chinese intellectuals even more cautious; a majority applied their talents to pragmatic examinations of administrative process, which might have had more influence on Chinese policy-making than the major work

coincided with the new and unprecedented series of blows inflicted on the Qing dynasty by the British in the Opium War of 1839–1842 and the Arrow War of 1856–1860, which were mainly followed up with attacks by the Russians, the French, the Japanese and the Germans before the century's end. The apparent barrenness of nineteenth-century Chinese culture may slowly be dissipated by new research, but it certainly seems a period in which individual modes of expression had been effectively stifled by self-imposed orthodoxies reinforced by imperial policy in the face of external aggression and internal rebellion.

Such aggression and rebellion, of course, have been a part of Chinese life through much of this century as well. Once again, the intellectuals seeking significance have been drawn, willingly or not, into a consistently murderous political arena. The late nineteenth-century generation that first grew seriously interested in the application of Western science to what they called China's "self-strengthening", and in the application of Social-Darwinist principles to China's survival and transformation as a nation, were mostly involved (often fatally so) in the struggles against the Manchu rulers and the sub-struggle of constitutional monarchy versus republican forces, that did indeed lead to the fall of the Qing in 1912. But the ineffectiveness of the early Republican government in the face of warlordism made consistent application of the intellect to the political process out of the question.

The large outflow of talented Chinese students to Europe, the United States, Japan and – after 1917 – to the Soviet Union, promised to open up the situation for intellectuals in a totally new way; but those who returned at any time after 1923 found the alignments already being drawn along ideological and institutional lines by the fledgling Communist party and by the inheritors of Sun Yat-sen's Guomindang (Kuomintang) organization. Intellectuals were at once co-opted into the service of socialist realism or Confucianism, or Chiang Kai-shek's ideological faction, in this world of impossible choices many of China's most brilliant writers – Lu Xun, Wen Yiduo, Xu Zhimo – relapsed into sarcasm or silence.

There seems, from our current

vantage-point, an extraordinary telescoping of history in the fact that the extent of "Westernization" in the 1930s should have haunted so many Chinese under the Communist regime after 1949 – though we might gain more perspective on this process if we reflect on the significance of 1930s "Sovietization" in both the United States and Europe on the political processes of the 1950s and 1960s. In China, where so many of the intellectual elite had received either foreign PhD degrees, or had been trained within China by Western teachers, as soon as a concerted effort was made to equate Western influence with capitalist corruption, the jig was up. Even those intellectuals who edged into positions of some cultural-political influence during the later 1940s did so only by dint of vigilance in the face of condemnations and criticisms by colleagues and classmates – to which they reciprocated in kind, as can be seen by the lives of Ding Ling, Zhou Yang, Guo Moruo or Mao Dun, to name only the most prominent. Once again some of those who had seemed most brilliant as writers based on their promise in the early 1940s, such as Qian Zhongshu or Shen Congwen, survived as scholarly commentators, not as creative presences. What the Cultural Revolution of 1966–72 did was to cap this process by combining the hunt for "feudal remnants" and "capitalist elements", so that it became impossible to create an acceptable aesthetic vision unless one worked entirely within the zone of folk art (and even that had to avoid any taint of "primitive superstition").

It is not surprising that now, seven years after the promise of a partial thaw, Chinese writers – young, middle-aged, old – are feeling their way to see where that acceptable zone of expression lies, one that can draw some inspiration from the past, some from the West, and some from the present without offending the Party's watchdogs or ever-cautious colleagues. "Democracy Wall" was both slogan and reality, but it did not change very much. One can just salute those Chinese writers who are beginning to evolve new forms of socially-aware verse and prose that are aesthetically adventurous and politically sharp. They come from a hard tradition and we should not begrudge them some caution, as they poke their heads, like so many before them, over the sandbags that line their trenches.

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Building up the prophetess

Rosemary Ashton

DAVID WILLIAMS

Mr George Eliot: A Biography of George Henry Lewes
289pp. Hodder and Stoughton.
£12.95
0 340 25711 2

The biographer of George Henry Lewes faces two special problems. The first is how to deal with Lewes's family, childhood and youth, about which little is known; the second, how to keep Lewes from receding into the background in the years after 1854, when he became the muse, encourager and literary agent of George Eliot. Though David Williams now faces his own difficulties or gives expression to these difficulties or to his proposed method of solving them; the biography of Lewes, Mr George Eliot does answer them, though in some odd ways. Understandably, he spends little time summarising the few facts known about Lewes's personality, and contenting that his grandfather, Charles Lew Lewes, was a successful

comic actor; that Lewes's father died in 1824 and that he acquired a stepfather, Captain William; that Lewes was educated unconventionally in London, France and Jersey. What is not known may be guessed at. Accordingly, Williams pictures Lewes and Captain William as being ever at loggerheads, as Lewes's "our general idea of the step-relation. In the absence of evidence, he speculates, "the probability that Lewes's wife, Anne Lewis, shared not only with Lewes, but also with her own father, a taste for "variety" in her sexual life. Conjecture becomes, imperceptibly, assertion.

The problem is real. It is difficult to get close to Lewes, both because of the lack of information (no diaries survive from the period before 1854) and because of the chameleon-like quality of the correspondence which survives. In these circumstances, of course, Lewes's writings are a main source of information for the biographer. Lewes's critical, novelist, actor, historian, philosopher, biographer, of Goethe, natural scientist and psychologist must yield, the "recognizable personality" Williams believes it is the biographer's

business to present. What this amounts to in practice here is that Williams explains, for example, the "happy derivative" play *The Noble Heart* (1842) as "giving the impression of having been composed in brief snatched moments between nursing the baby and thinking over what next to say about Spinoza." That a consideration of Lewes's attraction to Spinoza's ethical system might also yield some sense of Lewes's personality seems not to have occurred to Williams. Indeed, he shies away from Lewes's intellectual life, contenting himself with general remarks like "he knew what Hegel had to say, as well as Fichte." This is a pity, particularly as Lewes had well as social, professional as well as intellectual relations, several important contemporaries in the fields of philosophy and science. The friendship with Herbert Spencer, who preceded him in the George Eliot's affections and who introduced her to Lewes – Williams writes, "they talked at length together, about abstractions, for the most part, and accompanied each other on those vast Victorian walks which went such a long

way towards counterbalancing the effects (dire on poor Thackeray) of those vast Victorian meals." Such sentences abound, and they have their attractions. The reader feels himself swept along in an assertive, undemanding survey of the Victorian age, while the feeling he is getting closer to Lewes.

In addressing the problem of George Eliot's appearance in Lewes's life, Williams argues in two ways. First, he claims that Lewes's part in helping Mary Ann Evans to become George Eliot was greater than has been thought. Lewes not only "built up his beady-eyed little partner into a monumental prophetic figure", he probably also wrote the novels with her. "Did he write some of the dialogue himself? Or did he simply teach her the tricks of the trade?" asks Williams. The effect of such unanswerable questions is, unfortunately, to lay more stress on George Eliot's novels than on Lewes's own work of writing, editing and lecturing. Let the reader resist the suggestion that Lewes (whose novels, *Rambling*, 1847, and *Rose, Blanche and Violet*, 1848, were, as Williams admits, poor efforts) took a creative

hand in the work of "George Eliot". Williams argues from a different direction. F. R. Leavis, "choicest of winners", has, according to Williams, brought about an over-estimation of George Eliot's novels. Williams feels he can show how wrong this is to diminish both George Eliot and Lewes – and – as the title of Williams's book warns us – to allow the issue to take up the foreground of a work ostensibly devoted to illuminating Lewes. Nevertheless, Williams's book affords some pleasure, if only because the author's enthusiasm for his subject is evident throughout.

Winifred Gérin's last book, *Ann Thackeray: Ritchie: A Biography*, which was first published in 1981, has recently been published in paperback (306pp. Oxford University Press, £3.95. 0 19 281400 1).

Missionaries and cowboys

John K. Fairbank

MICHAEL H. HUNT

The Making of a Special Relationship: the United States and China to 1914

416pp. Columbia University Press. \$36. 0 23105516 1

JAMES REED

The Missionary Mind and American East Asia Policy, 1911-1915

258pp. Harvard University Press. \$26. 6 74576578

The American sentimentality about China, which so appalled Churchill when he visited Roosevelt in 1941, is still alive in the White House forty-two years later, even though reduced to a residual concern for Taiwan. It is still a special case that challenges historians to explain it. One must begin by putting the United States China policy within the general context of American conservative wishfulness about today's outside world. American-Soviet rivalry, a white-and-black drama pitting Hollywood against the KGB, brings out the American stereotypes regardless of their utility. Behind Mr Reagan's playing to his audience of the moment loom the missionary and cowboy attitudes that informed America's transcontinental and trans-Pacific expansion - the righteous exhortation to shape up democratically, but in any case the readiness to support the assumed good guys with firepower.

These culture-bound attitudes of evangelism and righteous violence, so often combined in the American neighbourhood, did not at first combine in the special case of China because Victorian Britain did the original dirty work there by fighting for the unequal treaty privileges, and so the Americans could enjoy the opportunities of trade and proselytism without the stigma of having secured them by force. This lay at the heart, I think, of the enduring American sentiment about China as an outlet for the Christian impulse unimpeded by the onus of coercion. The British navy supplied the gunboats. The Americans could preach. Today Mr Reagan's atavistic concern for Taiwan, like Mrs Thatcher's for Hong Kong, echoes the Palmerstonian era when the unequal treaty system was imposed on the

Manchu dynasty so that foreign trade with China could prosper under foreign law, and foreigners' human rights in China could be protected by extraterritoriality. Let us not deride our predecessors. Human rights are still a militant issue.

Michael Hunt tells us that when the warfare in Korea, the Taiwan Straits and Vietnam inspired him to study American-East Asian relations, he found the historical literature "disappointingly irrelevant" as well as "dated, narrow, and one-sided". As a student at Yale, where many of these sins have been committed, he found a great opportunity. His book begins with "The rise of the Open Door constituency", by which he means "a set of interest groups - American businessmen, missionaries and diplomats - with a common commitment to penetrating China and propagating at home a paternalistic vision of defending and reforming China". In addition to combing the American writings and documents, Hunt has filled in the Chinese side by using both Chinese documents and an increasing number of Chinese monographs and articles. The result is bibliographically comprehensive, a magisterial survey that should be of wide influence. It begins by noting the early American profits from opium, tea, and silk in the old Canton trade after 1784, which founded the never realized myth of the China market. After 1830, Protestant missionary pioneers, finding no converts, developed their two-way function as image-makers. They told the Chinese of the trilemma of Christianity, democracy and material progress, while describing to their home constituents the faded grandeur of a Chinese civilization sinking in decay, sin and heathenism. The commercial and evangelical interests coalesced by the 1890s in demanding an open door of opportunity to seek Chinese buyers and believers.

Hunt's "special relationship" is noteworthy because it was so especially unequal. By mid-century, Cantonese surplus labour had discovered California and soon the Chinese arriving there greatly outnumbered the Americans going to China. Hunt finds curious parallels.

Chinese immigrants and American missionaries, the two groups whose lives impinged most intimately on the other culture, evoked in the xenophobic imagination strikingly mirrored anxieties... the supposed

proclivity of depraved missionary and immigrant alike to defy sexual taboos and to make use of drugs and poisons to seduce unwary women and children... The mission compound no less than Chinatown was regarded as a hotbed of subversion.

In the 1880s and 90s, when American missionaries sometimes suffered from mob action in China, Chinese labourers hired to build the western American railways suffered from mob action by American workers. In these parallel but unrelated riots scores of Chinese died but almost no Americans. The Chinese were only ordinary foreigners quite lacking in gunboats.

As the American missionary-cum-legation secretary, S. Wells Williams, noted as early as 1868, "If the Americans in China had suffered one tithe of the wrongs that the Chinese have endured within the United States since 1855, there would certainly have been a war on account of it". Sino-American treaties gave reciprocal rights of trade and residence but the American labour movement, while still struggling for its right to exist, denied any such right to Chinese labour. The movement for Chinese exclusion grew steadily in the American West and the open door from the Canton region to California was summarily closed, while the movement in China to get rid of missionaries led only to the futile Boxer rising of 1900, after which the missionaries became more numerous and the Open Door in China became an American shibboleth.

Meanwhile Chinese easterners accustomed to utilizing Western Mongols against Western Mongols and vice versa, could seldom resist trying to use the Americans to offset the British, Japanese or Russians. Yet throughout China's long warring of American good offices, mediation, neutral support, or outright alliance against other powers, the Americans by temperament consistently led the Chinese on to expect more American performance than ever evinced. Feeling themselves free of the taint of imperialism and honest in their intentions, since they had no need for dishonesty, American representatives both official and otherwise confided to the Chinese their devotion to peace and friendship, and their readiness to help. Since the American posture was almost entirely one of talk without any intention or capacity for *Realpolitik*, all this friendly flattery came to nothing and merely misled the Chinese. Time after time, when it came to action, the Americans remained passive. Hunt traces, for example, the efforts of Li Hung-chang to make use of the United States in his efforts to ward off disaster by having a foreign policy in Korea. Yet, every time, the American naval officers, diplomats, advisers or ex-presidents like U. S. Grant proved more quick with words than with useful action. Secretary of State John Hay made a good deal out of the British Open Door idea, but he never bothered to consult the Chinese about it. During the 1900s, Chang Chih-tung and other statesmen trying to save the North-east (Manchuria) from Russo-

Japanese condominium, repeatedly turned to the anti-imperialist United States but never with any success. In these same years the US Bureau of Immigration regularly harassed and humiliated Chinese students, scholars and even officials seeking to enter the Golden Gate. Hunt exhumes an appalling record of American racist arrogance that in 1905 triggered China's first patriotic boycott movement, against American goods.

James Reed's monograph adds an eloquent chapter to Hunt's survey. Reed begins his study of the Missionary Mind by noting how the American Protestant leadership confused in their thinking the expression of their normative ideals with their appraisals of reality. By the spread of "Christian Civilization" they meant really the spread of the white Protestant Christianity of Northern Europe and North America. When they spoke of "Christian China" hope was inextricably mixed with reality. Thus in 1914 the great evangelist Sherwood Eddy, fresh from revival meetings in China, declared "We have long ceased to doubt that we will win Asia for Christ". Reed finds, in short, the Protestant missions lived on doses of wishful thinking. The British China hand, J. O. P. Bland, in 1912 saw the American enthusiasm for China's republican revolution as a reflection of "the instinctive American love for the underdog and the reassuring optimism" of the missionary public, "to whom optimism is a vocational necessity".

The hopeful assumptions and indomitable realism of this view infected American policy thinking because the American missionary community was the only part of the country with first-hand information and a definite interest at stake. Assuming that at the turn of the century there were always some 300 China missionaries on furlough in the United States, Reed estimates that they presented their case in public at least 30,000 times a year, enough to keep their constituency of perhaps five million Protestant supporters properly concerned. The American business community, meanwhile, found only 2 per cent of American trade was with China. But they had inherited the tradition of the big profits of the old China trade before the Civil War and in the 1890s they were ready to hope for a China market. On the whole American men of affairs were Europe-oriented. The foreign service was not yet a profession and American interpreter and translator staff came mainly from missionary sources. Thus the Missionary Mind formed American opinion by default. "The campaign for Christian Civilization became a kind of crusade," says Reed.

between the years 1905 and 1915. During that decade thousands of bright young well-scrubbed Protestant Student Volunteers sailed from San Francisco to build a Christian Civilization in Asia. The number of missionaries doubled and the budgets of the Mission Boards doubled too. By 1915 there were nearly 10,000 foreign missionaries one in every 1500 adult Protestants...

In the absence of large economic strategic interests, American policymakers were left to conceive of the role in China as benevolent and high principled. This laid them wide open to the foreigner through friendship. Minister Paul S. Reinsch, who alone single-handedly triggered the American protest against Japan's Twenty-one Demands of 1915, did not disclose to the State Department that he was guided every evening by consultations with the astute young Wellington Koo of the Chinese foreign office, who depicted the Japanese menace in fervent terms but without disclosing too many details. It appealed to the benevolent paternalism of Professor Reinsch and found an eventual response in the other political scientist, Professor Woodrow Wilson, who was the president.

Hunt's Open-Door constituency and Reed's Missionary Mind had paternalistic and rather arrogantly aggressive qualities which both authors see conducting later to the war in Korea and Vietnam. The America attitude towards China was unrealistic, writes Reed, by "dangerous good intentions", by a "flawed and essentially ethnocentric vision" while Hunt also observes that "China - vast, populous, and teetering between renovation and collapse - held out boundless opportunity to its American expansionist impulse in all its guises. One could go further and suggest that China represented an only opportunity for a concrete need for help of the sort that missions and good works and later John D. Rockefeller could supply. The special relationship had its origin on the Chinese side in the complex striving that led China into revolution, which not the main focus of these two analyses of Sino-American relations. The ideas of a special relationship and of winning China for Christ were recurrent American responses to China's ever-growing potentiality for modern transformation.

The Chinese culture that came under stress from modern changes was the most distinctive, separate and ancient, the most self-sufficient, balanced and massive, of any known to history. China's intermittent revolution, fitfully gathering steam during the last hundred and fifty years, is therefore far the most deep-going and large-scale social change ever required by history. American believers in change, dimly aware of this titanic and tortuous process, responded in the various fashions that these historians as shy describe. The Chinese people, in the view, made a special claim on American concern simply because they were in such comprehensive trouble. Indeed they still are, and the claim is still being made and responded to.

Ironically, Mr Hunt's chronicle of injustice to the Chinese in America will reinforce the old missionary sentiment of guilt and the need for atonement through good works. History constantly needs revision yet it slips away slowly. Taiwan and Hong Kong, Reagan and Thatcher, even missionaries and cowboys are going, but hardly gone.

Art and the social framework

Michael Sullivan

Many people in the West still think of the Chinese art of the twentieth century as consisting either of conventional landscapes, birds and flowers, or of inept imitations of the European art. If this were an accurate idea, there would be no reason to give modern Chinese art our serious attention. In fact it is a great deal richer and more various than that which we have yet seen in Britain. Moreover much of the best art of the last half-century has been wrung from its creators out of the excitement of discovery, out of suffering, despair and hope - a whole range of emotions which have never before been universally the inspiration of art in China. It is a moving witness to a great civilization in travail.

After the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, the Party promoted the idea that cultural oppression had begun with the Gang's ascendancy around 1970. Before long it was admitted that the nightmare had begun in 1966 with the start of the Cultural Revolution. Painters, writers and musicians, however, knew that for many who had supported the new regime during the honeymoon years after Mao came to power, night fell in the autumn of 1957, when Mao repudiated the Hundred Flowers Movement, and many who had thought that they were weeds - and weeds they remained for the next nineteen years. During all that time no one spoke out, remembering perhaps the remark of the philosopher Zhuang Zi in similarly perilous times that he would rather be a little piglet than a sacrificial ox.

Why then did we who should have known this not speak out against the régime much earlier? Because some of us, myself included, were caught, as were the artists themselves, by the moral dilemma: can one claim freedom of expression for his compatriots and for the artist when his compatriots are for the artist when he has the chance to teach others what he has, and so discover for himself how the world around them? Anyone visiting a department store in China, even in the worst years before 1976, must have been struck by the crowds around the art materials counter, every peasant and worker, it seemed, had taken to the brush. What was the painter back from Paris or New York to do? The option to retreat into his Shanghai atelier was no longer open to him. Only by helping to close the huge gap between himself and his people could he rediscover his identity as a Chinese. It did not need Mao Zedong to teach the painter this. Pang Xunlin, the oil painter, returning from France in 1932 and discovering how he had lost touch with his own people, had burned the work he had done in Paris, retired to the country for a year, and started again. It was not long after 1957 that the idealism began to fade, yet the outside observers it seemed that the ethical challenge still confronted the painters for some years after Liberation.

During the Cultural Revolution artists and intellectuals once again were denounced, as they had been in 1957, humiliated, their life's work confiscated and in some cases destroyed. By 1979 the chaos was over, the warring factions were united and the Cultural Revolution declared officially ended. But this was not the end for the artists. Now they had to be re-educated, to be sent deep into the country to work as common labourers in the fields. The more senior they were, the longer they stayed, for the more did their brains need washing out. Only the infirm and the insignificant escaped. For several years the painter Ya Ming and Huang Yungyu belonged to what they later wryly called the "Dung Basket" school of painting; but they were fortunate compared with the Shanghai artist Lu Dazhang who was in handcuffs for fourteen months, and then sent to prison. Many of the victims were forbidden to do any creative work until their rehabilitation in 1979. Yet, working today beside those who had denounced them, they show surprisingly little bitterness. "We don't blame them," I was told, "they only did what they thought right".

By October 1980, however, Deng Xiaoping had decided that freedom had gone far enough. There began a long series of articles on the evils of self-expression, and a debate about abstraction in which the courageous painter Wu Guanzhong seemed for a moment to be dangerously exposed. In recent years the magazine has enormously improved in appearance and content; it now includes features on contemporary Chinese artists living abroad, such as Zao Wouki, while condemnation is reserved for the more extreme elements of Western art such as Funk, Junk and the work of Christo.

When I was leaving Peking in 1980 Pang Xunlin felt it necessary to apologize for the state of art: "Don't judge us by what we are doing," he said. "This is just the beginning." No such apology would be needed today. The range and quality of painting have improved immeasurably, while artists and students are hungry for Western art. In the most unlikely places, a notable instance being the cheerful paintings by the peasant women of Jinshan County in Zhejiang; these clearly show the influence of Matisse, which could have reached them by way of reproductions of the master's late work in the February 1981 issue of *Melushu*. There was a time only a few years ago when the state of contemporary art in China could be measured by the work of a few established painters such as Pan Tianshou, Li Keran and Huang Yungyu. Today hundreds if not thousands of young artists are reaching out in different directions. It is doubtful if a single observer could any longer grasp the whole picture.

Melushu is an official organ. One painter told me that neither he nor his colleagues read it, although they are obliged to write for it. But it is no longer the only art magazine in China, while *Melushu* (Art) in Hong Kong, although under disguised Beijing sponsorship, publishes the work of more controversial artists which *Melushu* has not the space or inclination for. *Melushu* is, moreover, beginning to publish material on art and artists of the years before 1966 that was thought lost, and so to fill an important gap in the historical record.

The authorities would have the artists feel that all that is behind them now. The old generation of hard-line Yeann-trained wood-engravers who became directors of the art schools in the 1950s is dying off. Their place is a great deal looser. They can still be jerked at any moment, although to what effect becomes an increasingly fascinating question. In 1982 Hu Qianmu wrote in *Hongqi* (Red Flag) that the new Hundred Flowers (surely an unfortunate name) were not to be interpreted as a policy of "bourgeois liberalization", and he called for emphasis on the tradition of "criticism and self-criticism" to check the weakness and laxity in combating this tendency, which was clearly getting out of hand. The fact is that few people listen to this kind of thing any more; indeed, when we read of Zhou Yang, Party art theorist and scourge of the liberals, praising disco because it is a part of popular culture, it seems that the initiative is slipping out of the Party's hands. If a backlash is to come it will most likely come from the Army, increasingly isolated from the recent advances in economic and cultural life.

Issues of 1978 began with Mao and attacks on the Gang. By March the genre paintings of Courbet, Millet and Lhermitte were appearing, then works by Piranesi. Then pictures from the exhibition of paintings commemorating the great Tianshanmen demonstration of April 4, 1976 mourning Zhou Enlai - a turning-point in modern Chinese cultural history that inspired some of the most moving and dramatic contemporary Chinese art and poetry. Incidents in the war with Vietnam share the July issue with the eighteenth-century Yangzhou Eccentrics and a watercolour of a young girl in the manner of Jules Pascin. The controversy about the nude is decided in the nude's favour by the publication of postcards of classical sculpture collected and annotated by Zhou Enlai during his student days in Paris.

1979 and 1980 were the years of healing, of comparative freedom, and of the beginning of an interest in art outside China, including a somewhat ambivalent attitude to modern Japanese art. Works were reproduced by Carpeaux, Michelangelo, Covarrubias in Ball, Klimt and the Vienna Sezession, and the Post-Impressionists. This was the heyday of restored US-China relations, reflected in discussions of modern American art and an important and comprehensive exhibition in Peking from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts which included, over Chinese objections, works by contemporary artists such as Pollock and Olitski.

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Emic evidence

James L. Watson

PAUL CHAO
Chinese Kinship
247pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul.
£15.
0 7103 0020 4

Prospective readers should be warned that they will learn little of value about Chinese society from this book. It would appear that *Chinese Kinship* was written in the late 1950s or early 60s and that no effort has been made to update it. Other than Maurice Freedman's *Lineage Organization in Southeastern China* (1958, wrongly cited as 1963), no other recent study of Chinese kinship is referred to. The author appears to be completely

ignorant of the vast literature produced in this field since 1958. Chao faithfully reproduces many of the standard fallacies and popular misconceptions about the Chinese kinship system that Abner Baker, Beattie, Cohen, Ebrey, Freedman, Fried, Gallin, Harrell, Huang, Johnson, Pasternak, Potter, Skinner, Sung, Wang, Ward, Wolf(s), Wong, Ying and a host of others have worked so hard to dispel. To cite only one example, his discussion of lineage organization betrays a fundamental naivety common among those who attempt to find explanations for social phenomena in the Chinese classics. Lineages are not, as Chao tries to show, the natural outgrowth of family sentiments and filial piety. Joseph Needham, in his effective Foreword, argues that "Professor Paul Chao has given us in this book an outstanding example of sociological

anthropological work done on a people by one of themselves: the self-observation of a culture seen from within rather than from outside". Internal studies of the type praised by Needham (often referred to in the jargon of "emic" social anthropology) are useful. *Chinese Kinship*, by Chiang Yee, springs immediately to mind, as do the fascinating autobiographies of two Chinese women, *A Daughter of Han* and *Madam Yin: A Memoir of Peking Life* (edited by Ida Pruitt). Unfortunately Chao's book has none of the redeeming features usually associated with "emic" commentaries by internal observers. He does not make effective use of his personal experiences in China. Instead he builds on evidence drawn haphazardly from classical texts and field studies carried out by others.

they go out into the mountains – not to paint, for they would do that when they got home – but to drink at the fount of nature. Subjects for which there were no conventions in the repertoire were simply not seen as paintable. No Suzhou artist, for instance, ever thought of painting the waterways or the texture of the roofs and stained white walls of his native city, nor would he have called them beautiful. Indeed, he would not have thought them beautiful precisely because there were no images in his repertoire with which to reproduce them. Similarly, the dark side of life remained utterly beyond the realm of paintable subjects.

Experiments in the use of the traditional style to express modern ideas go back seventy years and more to Gao Jianfu and Xu Beihong, trained in Tokyo, Paris and Berlin. But its expressive limitation is obvious: an emphasis on ink line and tone which precludes the effective rendering of mass, light and shade, and above all of colour; while its seductive rhythms too easily lured the artist into the making of faultless pictures of great beauty and sameness. Moreover, mastery of the traditional technique demands years of disciplined practice, and the young artists are impatient. Western forms and techniques – and the same applies even more forcibly in the realm of music – enable the artist to break free, touch areas of feeling never before explored in Chinese art, and for that very reason to feel not less, but more completely, Chinese.

By realism I do not mean photographic realism, which interests few artists although it fascinates the public by reason of its novelty; still less do I mean socialist realism, a form of romantic art of which artists and public are in any case heartily sick; but the direct transmission to paper or canvas, unfiltered by ideology or pictorial conventions, of the artist's visual experience. We who have so long been free to accept or reject this approach to reality can have little idea of the thrill and challenge its discovery presents to the Chinese painter. What these artists want from Western art is what helps them most faithfully to record their "little sensation". If some of their work reminds us of our own academic realists of a century ago that is because

these Chinese artists are concerned with the same kind of problems. Thus Courbet and Millet have been powerful influences, while more recently tribute has been paid to Andrew Wyeth, for example in an oil painting by the young Sichuan painter He Duoling of a herd-girl with her buffalo, sitting in the meticulously painted grass of a meadow that is clearly inspired by Wyeth's celebrated "Christina's World" (which the artist could have seen in a colour reproduction on the back of *Shijie Meishu* (World Art), a relatively new journal with international coverage published by the National Art Academy in Peking).

Abstraction has long been a subject of controversy. The time is now past when it could be dismissed as "bourgeois formalism". Like many other Chinese aesthetic terms, that for abstraction, *cho-xiang*, carries useful ambiguity. In his articles written for the common Chinese reader Wu Goanzhong takes it to mean abstracting (*cho*) the essential image (*xiang*), citing as examples the swiftly sketched birds of the seventeenth-century individualist and eccentric Bada Shanren. Other writers, including Li Keran, have written of "essentiality", grasping the essential form, as it has been codified for instance in the *Mustard Seed Garden*, although Li Keran would certainly insist that this is something that every good painter must do for himself. However, this avoids the issue. Wu Goanzhong in his conversation and private correspondence acknowledges that "essentiality" and abstraction are two different things. He himself prefers non-figurative art, and paints such pictures for his own pleasure although he is not yet permitted to exhibit them.

In a moving letter Wu Goanzhong puts the choice facing the modern Chinese artist in words that make one think of Van Gogh. After saying how much he admires Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian and Miro, he goes on, "But I also love my own people. But so often there is conflict between the two, and this is my great sorrow. So I am working and struggling, not wanting to forsake my love of both or turn against one or the other. What I have written is



A contemporary still life by a peasant woman from Jinhua County in Zhejiang: the official art history periodical *Meishu* (art) has recently been widely available in China and reproductions of paintings by Maixue were published in it in 1981.

to try to help our own people to understand and to get rid of their fear and suspicion of abstraction in Western art. So I can only start from the point of view of semi-abstract art, like the work of Bada Shanren. But the younger artists find it easier to understand." Some of the senior faculty of the art schools are still extremely hostile to these new tendencies, denouncing as "abstract" anything that is formalized, unless the artist's intention is decorative. What is most significant is that in the intense debates now going on about these issues, the old guard can no longer reduce the opposition to silence. They still exert their power through their control of appointments, exhibitions and publication, but it is only a matter of time before they pass from the scene and the issue of

abstraction, like that of the nude, will be satisfactorily resolved.

As for self-expression, *ziwo*, *biaoxian*, I wonder if that is the right word. The authorities frequently condemn it in the literature and art journals, but they seem to be striking at an imaginary enemy, attacking the kind of self-indulgent romanticism that was fashionable among the Shanghai aesthetes of the 1920s, when the emphasis was indeed on the discovery of the self (*ziwo*). That kind of art does exist today, as does pornography, but it is not important. What the guardians of orthodoxy are nervous about is the belief still held by some artists and writers that it is their duty to express their feelings about the sickness in today's society; if the millennium did

not arrive with the fall of the Gang of Four they must say so, and endure censure for their "negative attitude". Impressions from a very recent visit, however, indicate that in this increasingly materialistic society the rewards for the artist are disproportionately high and that the urge to protest, evident in the dissident groups of 1979 and 1980, has cooled off considerably.

The cultural authorities, no longer able to stem the tide of liberalization and cosmopolitanism that is beginning to flow through the big cities, attempt to guide it into the right channels, or at least to prevent the water being stained with the worst corruptions of Western society, for which they are greatly to be applauded. In this their attitude is thoroughly traditional, both in being Sino-centric and in the belief – shared by the great majority of serious painters and writers – that every individual, including the most gifted, must accept his place in the total pattern, must, as Zhou Enlai once put it to the artists, give up the private framework (*kuangkuang*) of his professional life and become part of the larger *kuangkuang* of society as a whole. Only the genuine eccentric is exempted. China's rejection of the more extreme manifestations of modern Western art stems not from Mao but from a holistic view of culture that is as old as China herself. Her culture still has a moral basis, and that is its strength. Its weakness is the overwhelming impulse to conform.

How then does the Western historian of modern Chinese culture adjust his focus? Must he put aside his belief in the inviolable freedom of the individual? If he cannot, must he condemn a society in which creative men and women are not, and never have been, entirely free? I cannot propose an answer. I can only suggest that in justly assessing the arts of contemporary China we must be prepared to recognize, even if we do not envy, a completely integrated system of values that, in spite of turmoil and upheaval, provides a solid background of continuity and strength against which the most creative men and women shine with a special brilliance.

The age of exuberance

David Hawkes

DAVID R. KNECHTGES
(Translator)

Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature: Volume One, Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals
628pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £43.10.
0 691 05346 4

ANN BIRRELL

New Songs From a Jade Terrace: An anthology of early Chinese love poetry
374pp. Allen and Unwin. £15.95.
0 0489 5026 2

The didactic view of literature – that in order to be tolerated it must be seen to support an ideology – has a very long history in China, but it has not always been totalitarian. Confucianism, which became an official orthodoxy in the second century BC, was quite as puritanical in its attitudes to literature, art and love as the Party leadership of today; yet – paradoxically – its most revered text was a collection of ancient songs some of which were unmistakably erotic, its most frequently cited poetic theory was a kind of expressionism, and the imperial court which "established" it, and which it faithfully served as, patron and principal consumer of most of the literature produced, more interested in flattery and entertainment than in being instructed or improved.

The expressionist theory applied to the poetry of "the ancients" assumed a golden age of philosophical kings who studied these metrical effusions of the *vox populi* in order to improve their administration. Exegesis could extract a relevant message from the most unpromising material. A lyric which likened the dimpling smile and flashing eyes of a princess to "embroidery on a white silk ground" was read by a disciple of Confucius to mean that "morality takes precedence over the rules of etiquette": an interpretation that does not seem strikingly obvious to us, though it met with whole-hearted approval from the Master.

But the poets of the Han dynasty (second century BC to second century AD) were no Aedonians lyre through which the wind of popular sentiment could freely blow; they were court poets and self-conscious writers. Moreover they wrote the ancient lyrics sort of poetry from the ancient lyrics which Confucius had expounded and based on the Confucian poetic theory had been based. The long, ornate, rhapsodic *fu*, in so far as it was an ancestor, derived from the shaman-chants of the South, its lexical richness, euphuism and hyperbole suited an expansive, adventurous age in which Chinese armies penetrated deep into Central Asia and Chinese merchandise regularly found its way into European markets, but were deeply disturbing to right-minded Confucians, and therefore, ultimately, to the writers themselves; so that, amidst all the self-confident exuberance, a note of guilt and unease kept stealing in.

One way in which the Han *fu*-writer could absolve himself from the charge of being merely entertaining and failing to provide the advice and admonishment that would enable his patron to become a better ruler was by placing an inbuilt retraction in the latter part of the *fu*, not in his own person, like Chaucer's retraction at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*, but in the person of his patron, Sima Xiangru, in his *fu* "81 Fantasy", concludes a long and dazzling description of an imperial hunt by making the emperor break off in the midst of the feasting, which follows it and give orders that his hunting-park should be made over to the peasantry so that the hungry may be fed and the widow and the orphan be supported. This device, which other *fu*-writers quickly adopted, was designed to satisfy both parties: the poet could feel that he had acquitted his Confucian obligation to admonish; the emperor, on his magnificence, was now, as an additional bonus, shown to be caring and compassionate as well.

Some finer consciences remained untrilled. The philosopher Yang Xiong (died AD 18), himself a prodigious poet, in later life dismissed *fu*-writing as a childish pastime "like carving insects" and genuinely regretted that he had "wasted" so much of his life doing it.

Towards the end of the second century AD, when the Han order was beginning to fall apart, a new kind of lyric verse was born, different both from the ancient lyrics of the *Book of Songs* and from the court poets' elaborate, impersonal *fu*. And with this diversification of literary forms came the beginning of genre theory and of literary criticism properly so called.

The Chinese equivalent of the sack of Rome occurred in AD 311 when Loyang fell to the barbarians. As many better-off Chinese as could get away fled south, where a Chinese court had established itself in Nanking. Thereafter, for three centuries, North China remained in the hands of foreigners, while a series of increasingly murderous native dynasties, each based in Nanking, continued to maintain a precarious hold on the South. This political Dark Age, which Western historians of China call the Age of Disunity, was, surprisingly enough, a period of remarkable cultural development. Buddhism, the religion of peace, flourished in this bloody period. Still an outlandish, exotic religion in the third century, by the fifth it numbered princes and emperors among its devotees, and distinguished men of letters not infrequently found a refuge in its monasteries. Indian Buddhism for the first time brought the Chinese in contact with a literate, highly developed foreign culture. The experience taught them many things about their own. It made them realize, for instance, that they spoke a tonal language – a discovery which was to have a profound effect on their literature, particularly their poetry.

Above all it enabled them, for a time at least, to break, or at any rate crack, the narrow mould of Confucianism and arrive at a freer, more sophisticated kind of criticism.

The Liang dynasty which ruled in Nanking during the first half of the sixth century is an extreme example of the combination of political darkness and cultural splendour which characterizes this age. The history of its founder Xiao Xiang and his numerous progeny reads like a Jacobean tragedy. Xiao Yan, betrayed by his own nephew to a foreign adventurer, died of hunger at the age of eighty-six, imprisoned after a siege of unprecedented awfulness in the course of which most of the inhabitants of Nanking lost their lives. His brilliant eldest son Xiao Tong having died many years previously as a result of a boating accident, the next eldest Xiao Gang was made puppet emperor by the conqueror, but deposed less than two years later in favour of Xiao Tong's eldest son and shortly after pressed to death on a sack of earth. Xiao Gang's ten sons were also put to death. His young nephew, the new puppet-emperor, and the young nephew's two brothers were drowned by the deputy of another uncle when the latter recovered what remained of Nanking from the conqueror. And so on. It would be tedious to narrate the various violent ends which overtook the wicked uncle and the numerous other Liang princes. Murder and treachery so monotonously reiterated seem to belong to the annals of Rob Uou rather than to serious human history.

Yet if we turn from the political to the cultural history of the time we find that Xiao Yan was both a devout Buddhist and one of the greatest ever patrons of Chinese Buddhism. He and Xiao Gang were accomplished poets and left quantities of verse, while, if somewhat slight, Xiao Gang's considerable "diplomat" Xu Ling, *fu*-writers quickly adopted, was designed to satisfy both parties: the poet could feel that he had acquitted his Confucian obligation to admonish; the emperor, on his magnificence, was now, as an additional bonus, shown to be caring and compassionate as well.

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Literary attitudes to the literary achievements of this age were somewhat ambivalent. Its gongoristic, allusive, overwrought prose went out of fashion, and its poetry, particularly the "Palace Style" favoured by Xiao Gang, came to be regarded as artificial, trivial and "decadent". Yet poets of this period were admired by Du Fu and Li Bo, and all Tang poets were to some extent formally indebted to them. Xiao Tong's anthology, the *Wen xuan*, remains to this day one of the first books that the student of Chinese literature has to invest in. During the Tang and Song dynasties (seventh to thirteenth centuries), when education was still liberal, a young man thoroughly familiar with the contents of *Wen xuan* was reckoned to be already half-way along the road leading to an official career. Xu Ling's *New Songs From a Jade Terrace*, which duplicates a good deal of the lyric section of *Wen xuan* but also includes much that Xiao Tong deliberately left out, has hitherto remained more of a book for the specialist, who has used it as a supplement to the larger anthology, but it is none the less indispensable to that smaller readership.

The idea of translating a whole anthology, particularly one as large as *Wen xuan*, may seem a strange one, though *Wen xuan* was in fact nearly all translated (into German) by the irascible scholar von Zach, who

published his renderings piecemeal in obscure local journals in Batavia, where for many years he lived and from where he conducted his private war against the sinologists ("Asinologen" he called them) until 1942, when the ship he was travelling on was hit by a torpedo. David R. Knechtges has generously dedicated his book to von Zach's memory.

Selections is a very scholarly work. It has an excellent introduction, translation and notes on facing pages (which I find much easier to work with than either back-notes or footnotes would have been) and a very full bibliography. The book is beautifully printed and there are masses of Chinese characters in the notes. This book contains only the first third of the section of *Wen xuan* devoted to *fu*, which Xiao Tong put at the beginning of his anthology. In other words, this fairly hefty book is almost exactly one-tenth of the anthology. One hopes that Professor Knechtges is young and robust or has gifted grandchildren. The introduction is, of course, an introduction to the whole of *Wen xuan* and therefore not very relevant to this volume. *Wen xuan* was intended, as much as any modern English anthology, to illustrate a set of principles; but it was mainly on the subject of lyric poetry that Xiao Tong and his contemporaries were divided (Xu Ling's anthology represents the rival camp) and lyric poetry is still a long, long way ahead.

I confess that I have always found these versified Baedeker accounts of capital cities intensely boring and do not see that very much could have been done to make them interesting. I do however see that we have to read them some time or other, and one is always grateful for any help one can get.

Anne Birrell's *New Songs From a Jade Terrace* is the whole anthology – almost exactly the same size as *Selections* but on thicker paper with

only half as many pages. It, too, is a handsome book, but it has no Chinese characters and not many notes. It seems to be designed for a rather wider, more general readership than Knechtges's book. Xu Ling's poetic principles permitted the acceptance of mildly erotic verse, including the occasional celebration of male (but not, I think, female) homosexuality. The erotic element is perhaps a little overplayed at times in these translations, partly because of Dr Birrell's choice of "loins" for *chang* ("bowels"), which is where the Chinese thought their emotions were seated. I don't think strong feelings in the bowels were associated in any way with sex.

After reading several hundred poems in which male poets impersonate lovesick girls (the predilection of male Chinese poets for writing this kind of thing persisted for centuries after the period covered by this anthology) one cannot help wondering to what extent the tinkling, almost-eyed, *livre de jade* female of Chinese poetry who so captivated early twentieth-century European poets is a product of Chinese male wish-fulfillment fantasy. Real-life Chinese ladies tend on the whole to be more like Turandot than Little Liu. No doubt a professional, booklength treatment of this question will in due course appear – if it has not done so already.

Chinese Love Stories from Ch'ing-shih (206pp. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books. \$29.50. 0 208 01920 0), translated and selected by Hua-yuan Li Maury, includes an example from each of the twenty-four chapters of the Ch'ing-shih, the anthology of stories and anecdotes about love compiled by Feng Meng-lung (1574–1646). The volume is fully annotated and contains an introduction, character glossary and bibliography.

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On the up and up

James Cotton

IMMANUEL C. Y. HSU

The Rise of Modern China

Third Edition

934pp. Oxford University Press.

£17.50.

0 19 503218 7

Author of a number of notable studies of modern Chinese diplomatic and intellectual history, Immanuel C. Y. Hsu, born in Shanghai and now an American professor, has revised his already encyclopedic history of modern China to take account of events since the death of Mao. Lucidly written and published at an exceptionally low price given its dimensions, this book has few rivals as an undergraduate text. However, it is for the most part a political and intellectual history and social issues are therefore given brief treatment.

Professor Hsu begins his narrative with the origins of the Qing dynasty in order to acquaint us with developments in China at a time when the "modern" period of European history may be said to have begun, and to provide the foundations for one of his chief theses, that modern Chinese history is not simply a record of reactions to external pressures, significant though he shows Western intrusions to have been. His section on the inner and north Asian strategy of the Qing is particularly to be commended as a counterpoint to a later shift of attention to maritime pre-occupations, and does much to explain why, when the Chinese government was pressed to decide its priorities it chose, in 1875, the reconquest of the western regions (to be successfully reorganized as Xinjiang) rather than the refurbishment of coastal defence. But Hsu considers Western influences to have been crucial, and subjects them to detailed analysis.

Inevitably one might criticise at the author's emphasis, especially in a work covering so much ground. In the

chapter devoted to the Nanking decade of the Guomindang régime, more space is devoted to the history of the Chinese Communist Party and its leadership than to the reform and reconstruction policies attempted by the government, while the coverage of the Sino-Japanese war in the subsequent chapter is mostly concerned with relations between the Guomindang, the Communists and the United States, and does not mention "Operation Ichigo" of 1944, a campaign which some would argue sealed Chiang Kai-shek's military fate after the war. Indeed, in the sections covering the late Qing, warlord and republican periods, Hsu is inclined to deal at length with personalities and political conflicts, but what he has to say represents for the most part a masterful summary of a great diversity of sources. Briefer sections are devoted to economic and social developments and although he offers a forceful and accurate critique of the baleful effects of foreign economic penetration of China, one is entitled to know a little more about the reasons for China's failure to achieve much needed unity in terms especially of which regions, classes or groups opposed or supported the various warlords (whose régimes were by no means a piece, as a number of recent accounts have shown) or the Guomindang.

In his discussion of events since 1976, Hsu is inclined to endorse the claims and assessments made by the present Chinese régime, as he did those of its predecessor in the previous edition of the book. There the Cultural Revolution was described as having accomplished "the unity of the masses and the leaders" with little detrimental effect upon the economy, and the closing sections depict a China united, militarily formidable (with an independent nuclear force) and set to play an influential part on the world stage. Achievements which were attributed largely to Mao and the Communist leadership. In this third edition the future of the country hangs in the balance, and Mao is excoriated for the events of the decade of the

Cultural Revolution which brought China to the brink of chaos and wasted untold opportunities, hard work, and human lives. However, Hsu now finds hope (and fresh justification of his book's title) in developments since 1976. He approves of the economic and social modernization programme espoused by Deng Xiaoping and his followers, the de-Maoization of the régime signified by the purge of Mao's clique, and the official pronouncements of 1981 concerning the history of the People's Republic and the contribution Mao made to it. These may be hopeful movements, and the present leadership may be more honest and sober than its predecessor, but it is testing credulity to describe the trial of the Gang of Four as indicative of the dawning of a new "era of emphasis on the rule of law in which sentences would be rendered only after guilt was proven by trial" since in this grotesque charade the defendants had been adjudged guilty long before the court had convened or charges been laid, and one of their special judges was also identified as having been among those who were persecuted at the Gang's hands.

Similarly, there can be little real expectation that the Chinese Communist Party will learn from its past errors and institute democratic procedures in its own structures or in Chinese society at large. The Deng leadership currently places the greatest emphasis on "the four basic principles" (socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism) and since it is left to the leadership itself to determine who or what is in opposition to socialism or the party, they clearly have carte blanche to dispose of those with whom they disagree, a situation consistent neither with the rule of law nor with democracy. As Professor Hsu comments, with the assessment by the present régime that about twenty years of its short life have been marked by serious mistakes, and that ten of those years have been nothing less than calamitous, the reader might well decide that the hopes of both régime and author are misplaced.

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To unseat the Chairman

Dick Wilson

YAO MING-LE

The Conspiracy and Murder of Mao's Heir
231pp. Collins. £9.95.
0 00 217141 4

"None of us kept a diary", the late premier Zhou Enlai explained to an eager American biographer towards the end of his life, "and none of us want to write our memoirs." More than any other country China draws a veil over her internal affairs. By cultural tradition the flow of information is restricted to a narrow circle of participants in high matters of state, and that instinct is now reinforced by Communist authoritarianism.

The study of modern Chinese history is thus vulnerable to the well-judged and well-written fake document. An agreeable spin-off, for example, from the prosecution of Gerd Heidemann, the German journalist behind the recent "Hitler diaries" would have been his confession to faking the story thirty years ago that Zhou Enlai had a son by a German mistress during his student days in Europe in the early 1920s. Heidemann's story went into remarkable detail, about the son being given a glass eye during the Second World War, dying on the Russian front but leaving in turn a son supposedly still living in East Germany. Only recently has diligent research by a Göttingen archivist shown that the story was indeed true, but about an entirely different Chinese student called Tschu Ling-gin.

The leader who has attracted most semi-fictional treatment is, however, the greyest and least inspiring of China's Communist heroes, Lin Biao. When Lin suddenly disappeared from the public gaze in late 1971 the most extraordinary tales were heard. The official explanation was that after falling in an attempt to murder his

patron and superior, Chairman Mao Zedong, Lin tried to fly to the Soviet Union, presumably to attempt a comeback with Russian help, but was killed when his aircraft crashed near the Russian border. Later stories were even more lurid. One retailed in a book of Han Suyin's three years ago had Zhou Enlai personally strangling Lin at the Communist leaders' favourite seaside resort of Beidaihe.

Now comes this book, which purports to be the "real" narrative, based on secret documents and testimony smuggled out of China. We are invited here to believe: (1) that Lin Biao conspired with several military colleagues to provoke a full-scale war with the Soviet Union, merely to give Lin a chance to surround Mao's emergency "bunker" without arousing the Chairman's suspicions; (2) that Lin would then gas his superior to death and take power, negotiating a friendly armistice with the Soviet Union under which the Chinese would be allowed to set up new socialist communities in the relatively uninhabited parts of the Siberian Far East - while the two countries would swallow up their neighbours by subversion and aggression, using nuclear power, until the whole world was made communist; (3) that Lin was aided in this conspiracy by his son Lin Ligu, whose sexual appetites, stimulated by American pornography, were satisfied by specially recruited girls whom he inspected from behind a see-through mirror while they were being medically examined by women doctors - not knowing that one of them was Mao's agent (and she gave the plot away); (4) that Lin's fellow-conspirators dithered so much over an alternative plan to blast Mao out of his special train with rockets, that they missed opportunities to destroy him in this last costly way; (5) that Mao having discovered the plot, invited Lin Biao and his wife to dinner as a means of getting them reduced to charred half-corpses when 60mm rockets were fired into their car as they left his secluded residence; and finally (6) that

in order to minimize the release of information, Mao ordered only a small part of the plot to be circulated to Party officials, with the fiction to be added that Lin was on the aeroplane which had in fact crashed, but carrying only some of his fellow-conspirators.

Lin, let us remember, was the man who had brilliantly out-generalled Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang commanders during the civil war of 1946-49. He was the man who was spoken of ten years later as the one who would step into Zhou Enlai's shoes as prime minister if Zhou became chairman after Mao, and he was then himself chosen as Mao's successor, even being written into the constitution in that role.

Lin was never convincing as a political leader. Physically he cut a pathetic, shuffling figure, ill-dressed, with an odd smile, seemingly a yes-man and a sycophant. Yet would the hero of the battle of the Pingxing Pass and many others, the man who served as Minister of Defence for so many years, the man who kept his footing through the dangerous shoals of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, have been so foolish as to contemplate starting an international war simply to put Mao off his guard - and then going on to lead a world crusade for Communism? He had apparently built up the 1969 clash with Russian forces over Zhenbao Island on the Ussuri River, for some political purpose that remains obscure. But that was only to a modest point and not as a part of a plot against Mao. And would he have allowed so many people, including his playboy son, to be privy to the secrets of such a conspiracy, and shown such indecisiveness as this narrative attributes to him?

Who then is Yao Ming-le, the author of this book? The dust-jacket claims that this is the pseudonym of a citizen of the People's Republic of China. The American China-watcher, Stanley Karnow, who contributes an introduction to this book, elsewhere identifies Yao as "a Chinese now living

in America". Leaving aside the unlikely candidates on grounds of age, 200 or so Chinese officials, journalists, diplomats and advanced scientific or technical trainees currently resident in the US - presumably someone who could have brought the various original documents surreptitiously out of China.

Knopf, the American publisher, showed the Chinese original of the book to Ross Perill of Harvard, and he declared it consistent with People's Republic provenance. Other sinologists of repute were asked about the later English translation and they all found it plausible, very likely to be true and of a pattern with earlier rumours. But two rumours do not make a reality, and the possibility exists that the book was written to deceive us - not, perhaps, for political reasons such as have prevailed in the past with Taiwan and USSR inventions (Zhou's alleged deathbed political testament is an example), but for commercial gain. This book, true or not, is going to make its author very rich.

That is because of the intrinsic excitement of the text itself at several points. Since, however, it mostly takes the form of extracts from the interrogations of those fellow-conspirators of Lin who survived, there is a certain incoherence to it all. It might make a good film, and a Forsyth or Le Carré would find good colourful detail about the characters. We have the mutually suspicious Chinese leaders sitting in their soundproof, triple-insulated, radiation-proof and counter-bugging-protected rooms or railway carriages, warily keeping track of each other's movements. Lin Biao himself even felt threatened by the sun, preferring to sit under ultra-violet lamps with the curtains drawn all day, wearing, in one scene, a "leopard robe faded gray, terry-cloth cap and slippers". Perhaps his ineffectiveness had physical causes, since a medical examination which Mao tricked him into undergoing detected advanced

arterio-sclerosis, bone-marrow disease, inflamed kidneys and pancreas and a blocked endocrine system.

Mao coped by sleeping with his head to the East (the Chinese word for being the lucky *drag* of his own name) drawing bamboo lots from divinatory cylinders in order to make the right decisions and sleeping only with young girls whose birthdates were lucky to him. Perversely he sometimes sowed seeds on his vegetable plot out of season. But he was in fine form at the Zhou Enlai called "the last supper" in Lin Biao, ceremoniously opening a 480-year-old bottle of imperial wine and serving his guest with succulent tendons of Manchurian deer. James Bond's quartermaster - "Q" would have got a good part in this. It was particularly satisfying to have Lin Biao's wife going to the "supper" with a radio watch reacting to her own pulse beat, and giving signals that were picked up by Lin's patrol car parked a mile away.

And what a time they had with the code names for their various plots - the "571 project", the "Jade Tower Mountain Scheme", the "Small Jade Fleet", "Large Joint Fleet". . . . Lin Zhou Enlai, who comes out of the book as the only possibly sane leader, is seen ruthlessly trapping Lin's son-in-law by blackmail, using politically damaging information about the boy's landlord Guomindang father. Afterwards we find Zhou lying stoutly about Lin's whereabouts in order to keep the latter's allies off the scent of his murder.

Where, one might ask, amongst all this is the refined scientific rationalism of Marx and his philosophy? The answer is, it goes only skin deep. As Mao himself comments at one point in the book: "The world is full of situations that must be dealt with by thick-skinned people like me." Much of this personal detail carries the ring of truth. Chinese politics probably are a byzantine and sordid as that. But whether this is how Lin Biao did it another matter.

Socking it to them

Michael Davie

LAURENCE LE QUESNE

The Bodyline Controversy
242pp. Secker and Warburg. £9.95.
0 436 24410 1

A book could be written about Anglo-Australian relations entirely in terms of sport, and it would be as revealing as a political history. Its principal chapter would deal with the bodyline controversy of 1932-3, when an England cricket team in Australia captained by D. R. Jardine regained the Ashes by using fast bowling methods described by the Australian authorities, in mid-tour, as "un-sportsmanlike". Sport and nationalism in Australia have been closely allied; in 1933 they fused. No doubt, Australia would not have left the Commonwealth, as some people feared at the time, but there is equally no doubt that the passion generated in both countries alarmed the Australian and British governments, as their generally amicable relations were suddenly disrupted by a burst of uncontrollable popular frenzy.

The dialectic operates in cricket as in no other sport. Pairs of fast bowlers arise first in one country, then in another, producing victories and recriminations. In 1975, Wisden described remarks by Thomson and Lillee - Thomson having said that he

enjoyed felling a batsman, and Lillee having written that he aimed "to hit a batsman in the rib-cage" - as "nauseating". In many Australian minds, though, Thomson and Lillee were repaying some of the debts stored up, and not forgotten, in the tribal memory during 1933. Again, the hostility shown by Australian crowds to Brierley, a recent England captain in Australia, was partly attributable to the images he aroused of the hated Jardine, with his apparent indifference to popular feelings and what the "outer" took (wrongly) to be his typical English arrogance.

Many books have been written about bodyline. This is the first by a historian, and it is endorsed in an introduction by G. O. Allen, who was one of the players on the tour who disapproved of bodyline tactics. Laurence Le Quesne teaches history at Shrewsbury School, where Neville Cardus once taught cricket. In many ways, his account is the best so far, though he says modestly, and perhaps rightly, that the definitive book is yet to be written. The old wounds are still open. Larwood and Voce, the two English fast bowlers principally concerned, declined to talk to him. Sir Donald Bradman, against whose dominance as a batsman bodyline was principally directed, has not yet told everything he knows, and may never do so. Not all the documents have yet surfaced. The post-tour reports to MCC by Jardine and P. F. Warner, the tour manager, have mysteriously

disappeared.

Mr Le Quesne lays to rest the legend that the British Cabinet discussed the row. But J. H. Thomas, the Dominions Secretary, certainly did, and is reliably said to have described it as the most troublesome crisis during his term of office. Le Quesne describes the sequence of events very well, but he also puts them in a wide context of Anglo-Australian attitudes and the beginnings of mass spectator sport. He analyses with due solemnity the evolution of bodyline; and he carefully defines, without partisanship, what was and what was not new in this form of attack.

One critical question, not hitherto tackled in so scholarly a manner, is whether or not it was all planned before the team sailed for Australia. If so, that would prove a special degree of cold-bloodedness on the part of Jardine and his co-conspirators. But Le Quesne, though he fully lays bare Jardine's contempt for Australians, and his ruthlessness and insensitivity, acquires him of this charge.

Was bodyline fair or unfair? The argument continues. The Le Quesne answer is that it was based squarely on intimidation, of which he disapproves. But he also has to concede that Jardine, accidentally, anticipated the sort of cricket that is increasingly violent times the crowd would want to see. Batsmen would not be wearing helmets if bodyline had not had a future.



A scoring chart commemorating G. L. Jessop's ninety-two runs in seventy minutes for England against South Africa at Lord's, July 1-2, 1907: an illustration from Grahame Parker's Gloucestershire Record: A history of Gloucestershire County Cricket Club (256pp, with 133 plates. Pelham Books. £8.95. 0 7207 1454 0).

Ministering morality

P. H. Sutcliffe

JAMES D. COLDHAM

Lord Harris
171pp. Allen and Unwin. £10.95.
0 04 796068 X

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century in England cricket became a national institution and was active in various subtle ways in fashioning the national character. Two men were largely responsible for its emergence as a famously disciplined and heroic pursuit, W. G. Grace and Lord Harris. Grace did it by setting unparalleled examples of skill on the field of play, Harris by dominating for many years all the seats and corridors of power.

A moderately good all-round player, George Harris lacked nothing in keenness and the will to win, and at an early age acquired a powerful instinctive impulse about the game. "Cricket is the ministers of a high moral and educational medium", he wrote. The certainty of cricket's intimate participation in divine grace stayed with him unchallenged all his life. On his eightieth birthday in 1931 he was writing to *The Times*:

To play it keenly . . . is a moral lesson in itself, and the classroom is God's air and sunshine. Foster it, my brothers, so that it may attract all who can find the time to play it; protect it from anything that would sully it, so that it may grow in favour with all men.

Among Harris's early distinctions was to be present at, and indeed to incite, the first full-scale riot in the history of the game, at Sydney in 1879, when he kept his men on the field until the official time for drawing stumps although by then both the crowd and his opponents had dispersed. In 1880 he captained England at the Oval in the first Test Match ever to be played against Australia at home. England won, but because the great F. R. Spofforth was unable to play the victory was not felt to be wholly convincing. Harris and the demon bowler met each other many times, and Harris may be said to have got the better of him. Overwhelmed by his pace in early encounters, Harris later managed on two separate occasions severely to damage Spofforth's right hand by driving the ball straight back at him with immense power. Spofforth admitted that he was never the same bowler again after the second injury.

Harris was a man of Kent. He more or less created the club, and captained the side between 1875 and 1889. This aspect of his career is responsible for the more tedious parts of James D. Coldham's otherwise admirable book. Cricketers biographers seem under an obligation to give more boring facts than most writers. There is really very little excitement to be had from learning that the protagonist has scored 11 and 15 at Tunbridge Wells, and then gone on to make 32 at Canterbury on the following Tuesday. Statistics and score sheets can of course be fascinating, and *Wisden* is always more compelling than prosaic accounts

of runs made and wickets taken. It comes therefore as some relief when Harris ceases to trouble the scorers for a time and joins Lord Salisbury's Government, subsequently becoming Governor of Bombay. In that capacity he showed an interest in agriculture, but his main service was the popularization of cricket, already devoutly played by the Parsis. He did indeed make possible by his initiatives Indian and West Indian participation in the game at the international level.

Coldham is most illuminating in a chapter entitled "The Golden Age". That fabulous era between 1900 and 1914 during which so many great and spectacular cricketers flourished was being scrutinized day in and day out by Harris. He would not have called it golden. He deplored the decline in batting standards, the inept techniques of so many of the younger players who had forgotten the glorious orthodoxy of the previous generation. A tendency to shuffle the right foot across and face the bowler with a two-eyed stance appalled him: it was a kind of immorality, a denial of God's gifts; it led to slow scoring, for the batsman was in no position to play his natural strokes.

During his years as the great administrator, the "uncrowned king" of cricket, Harris campaigned vigorously to improve the lot of the professionals, to such an extent that he was dubbed a "cricket socialist". He became obsessed by residential issues, throwing, his witch-hunts could damage if not destroy entirely a cricketer's career. Perhaps because this book is primarily addressed to the Gentlemen of Kent, who may still be jealous of his reputation, Coldham seems at times a little anxious not to allow the image of a meddlesome tyrant to intrude. He was a "natural leader who always knew his own mind", he does admit, which may be thought ominous. But Harris was, absolutely fair, scrupulously just: on that most people were agreed; it was the amount of "justice" he had to dispense that intimidated some. His power and influence were a little too great. But Mr Coldham relates a touching postscript to the story: the fourth Lord Harris from the seventh Lord Hawke, who in the thick of the bodyline crisis was to be heard at Lord's crying, "What would George have done? What would George have done?" As England were winning George may not have felt that the game was being sullied.

Father Lofts Retires

It was not lightly done to sacrifice
People for the small-talk of flowers;
Count purils and rafters swelling with rain;
To sleep in a house starting to grow again.
Creeping branches had lifted gutters;
Ivy made its way through the walls;
And the earth ooled with unknown wells.

Ashamed, he did not miss parishioners' feet
On the hollow stairs, or the vast back room
Where he took his meals; there was more life
In the squabbling birds, and sheep
Occasionally raising a gentle cheer,
Than he had ever known in the gaunt manse
With its curtains falling on bedded knees.

Marion Lomax

On the itinerary

Della Davin

ELIZABETH MORRELL

A Visitor's Guide to China
351pp. Michael Joseph. £12.95
(paperback, £8.95).
0 7181 1905 3

LIU JUNWEN

Beijing: China's Ancient and Modern Capital
254pp. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

The matter-of-fact tone of Elizabeth Morrell's book in no way conveys the excitement experienced by the visitor to China. Wonders such as the Great Wall, made familiar by endless photographs, nonetheless retain the power to impress even the most blasé of tourists. Foreign admirers of Chinese painting are amazed to find the depiction of mountain scenery in no more artistic convention: Chinese mountains actually look like that. Although so much has become familiar through description or film, much still remains strange enough to require explanation. I was once asked by some British tourists to help them purchase one of the beautiful lacquered wooden-lidded vessels which stand outside each house in the old town of Wuxi. When I explained that they were night-soil containers awaiting collection, enthusiasm for this particular handicraft object died away quickly.

Nonetheless, the *Visitor's Guide* should prove a useful aid to the tourist in China who can of course rely on the country itself to provide the excitement. It contains detailed and up-to-date information on transport arrangements, travel formalities, hotels, food, climate and a host of other things. The excellent gazetteer, placed at the end of the book, lists, with a thumbnail sketch, the history, climate, and other features of each province, city, and town.

shops. It is unfortunate, given that this section is organized by province, that the guide's own map of China does not show the provinces. Other sections of the book summarize China's history and supply thumbnail sketches of her culture, society, and economy. They contain an impressive amount of detail but sometimes take example to tell the (possibly British) visitor to the Yuanmingyuan, Peking's old summer palace, that it was looted and burnt in 1860, but not that the troops responsible were British and French. The bare bones of historical narrative stripped of explanation and analysis lose their interest and meaning; indeed, given this treatment some episodes in the history of the People's Republic appear so bizarre as to lose all credibility, like the plot of a poor melodrama. The prospective traveller will do well to follow these subjects up through further reading.

Oddly, in a book which is sensitive in general to the mood of contemporary China, there is one reference to hotel staff as "boys", a colonial term which sounds a jarring note. The book could have been better checked and proof-read: we are told that Tianjin lies on the railway between Shanghai and Guangzhou (Ceking must have been intended); Shandong Province is at one point given the name of its capital city, Jinan; the title of W. J. F. Jenner's translation of the *ex-querant's* memoirs is wrongly given in the text as *From Prince to Commoner*; and they are correctly listed in the bibliography as *From Emperor to Citizen* under a misspelling of its author's Manchu name. There are a number of minor mistakes in the romanization of Chinese names but I have seen worse in other guides. Overall, despite its virtues, this is a guide which anyone going to China should take. It is informative and, as the situation for tourists has changed a lot quite recently, it has an important advantage over its competitors in being up-to-date.

Beijing: China's Ancient and Modern Capital

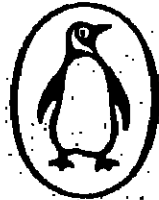
Modern Capital is very much a Chinese guide to the city. This in itself gives it interest as it shows how the Chinese themselves see their capital. As it is concerned only with Peking, it gives detail which is missing from Morrell's guide. I was especially pleased that it covered the Great Bell Temple, a place of beauty which deserves more attention than it gets. I remember being told by some unreconstructed monks who were still to be found there in the early 1960s that "manual labour is not good". I wonder what happened to them.

The *wowotou* which are still prepared in Peking's Fangshan restaurant just as they once were by the Empress Dowager, gain a mention in both books, but only *Beijing* explains why this normally cooked food served there. The Empress Dowager, fleeing the armies of the eight foreign powers which occupied Peking in 1900, took refuge in a peasant house where for the first time she tasted the *wowotou*, or cornmeal buns which were a staple food of her people. She found them delicious and when she returned to her capital she ordered her cook to prepare some. Afraid that without hunger to stimulate her appetite she would find them unpalatable he made them small and sweetened them and it is in this form that *wowotou* are offered to the famous restaurant's customers today.

As *Beijing* contains nothing about hotels and very little about travel and tourist facilities, it would not be an adequate guide to the capital on its own, but like all Chinese publications it is comparatively cheap and would be a worthwhile extra. The guided traveller may be cheered to notice that it devotes about the same space to Peking cuisine as it does to the wonders of the Forbidden City.

Foreign: INKAW 151pp. Ashford 1982

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Animals in performance

Stephen R. L. Clark

ROBERT A. HINDE

Ethology: Its nature and relations with other sciences
320pp. Oxford University Press. £9.50 (Fontana paperback, £2.95). 0 19 5203704

KONRAD LORENZ

The Foundations of Ethology
400pp. Springer. DM48. 3211 816232

Both these books are intended as introductions to, and commentaries upon, the study of animal behaviour within the framework of neo-Darwinian evolutionary theory. Both are informative, interesting, and usually cogent. Both are worth the attention even of those with some prior knowledge of the field, and neither can fail to encourage novices to find out more. That Konrad Lorenz's work will prove the more lasting of the two would probably come as no surprise to R. A. Hinde, whose brief was to acquaint the educated public with the current state of the game, rather than to meditate upon his life's work and reaffirm his main conclusions.

Professor Hinde addresses himself first to "core ethology", and then to its boundaries with other disciplines, the biological and social sciences. He identifies four sorts of question that ethologists habitually ask about the morphological and behavioural characters of organisms. What is the immediate causation? How does the character develop in the individual organism? What function does it have? How did it evolve, and from what beginnings? It is not clear whether he intends to hint at Aristotle's "four causes", which his four do not quite match. He then discusses particular cases in which these questions have been asked, and perhaps answered. Mobbing behaviour in the pied flycatcher can be evoked by either shrieks or owls, and it turns out that flycatchers do not confuse or run together the "effective stimulus characters". Only after puberty are male rats attracted by the scent of females: it turns out that this is because they then come to find the scent attractive, not because they simply could not detect the scent before. We can study an animal's "decision rules", its criteria for moving from one behaviour pattern to another, by subtle alterations in its environment.

The question of the individual's development, of ontogeny, can also be answered by subtle, or not-so-subtle, interference: chaffinches deafened after exposure to song but before song development do not progress to the characteristic chaffinch song, though they do if they are deafened only after they have begun to sing. In general, behavioural development has a "knack" of returning to the normal track, though Hinde is very unwilling to draw any "mystical" conclusions about the importance of "qualitative" (or old-fashioned teleology). Evolutionary theory provides a rich and suggestive context for the understanding of characteristic behaviour, even if we cannot always guess at the details of phylogenetic development. Courtship behaviour, for example, which may be selected as a guide to the fittest mates (while opening up possibilities of bluff and counter-bluff), may have begun as a product of ambivalence, of competing behaviour patterns.

Hinde shows commendable carelessness about the problem of defining such concepts as "fixed action patterns" (FAP), noting that not all supposed FAPs share any particular "defining" character. Ethologists might profit from closer acquaintance with the philosopher's notion of "family resemblance terms" (such, notoriously as "game") that apply only in virtue of the possession of some reasonable proportion of a list of characters. Equally, they might at last abandon the concept, as some of those working on the boundaries of human and non-human studies wish us to abandon the concepts of ordinary or "folk" psychology.

Such radicals as regard talk of anxiety or anger as merely pre-scientific efforts to explain behaviour

to be replaced (some day) by merely physiological description of human and non-human motions (will this be a description of behaviour, or the elimination of that category?), will be rather confused by Hinde's book. Sometimes he seems to have few qualms about speaking in folk-psychological terms, as of a bird which, not daring to attack a superior, turns on an inferior (otherwise called "displacement activity"). Sometimes he speaks of these as "software" explanations, that "many ethologists" hope will be replaced by "hardware" explanations (an unexamined metaphor), referring to the level of blood sugar or of brain excitation. Sometimes it is not altogether clear what is gained by Hinde's re-descriptions of behaviour which all of us can comprehend at a folk-psychological level: "for instance, the removal of the rat neo-cortex does not reduce receptive behaviour but seriously disorganizes preceptive behaviour" - that is to say, brain-damaged female rats don't find male rats as attractive as they did, though they are as attractive to the males as they were before.

Hinde has a fondness for arcane vocabulary that is out of place in a popularizing work: chaffinches behave "very cryptically" during a moult (does he mean "mysteriously", or merely - as I suspect - that they hide a lot?); birds "manipulate" nest material. If he were to write more ordinary English it might be that he would have felt more heat about some of the experiments he describes: "dogs treated with inescapable electric shocks subsequently showed diminished learning capacity in comparable situations, and many symptoms of depression". It being "ethically impossible" to study the effects of separation on human infants in controlled experiments, young monkeys were reared, with predictably unpleasant results, in variously deprived surroundings. Hinde nowhere expresses any doubt about the ethics of these experiments, though he professes not to see any scientifically unsalable barrier between the human and the non-human.

It is a known danger in any profession that the techniques and goals of that profession come to be taken for granted. It is this, along with the tortuous language that Hinde so often employs, that makes his book an unsatisfactory introduction to Science, he agrees, is a "multi-dimensional web", each discipline affecting others. What is missing, it seems, is any recognition that human beings have studied or are studying these questions elsewhere than in those academies and professions that define themselves as "scientific" (another family resemblance term). The study of animal behaviour, and human behaviour, is not a new thing; nor is the study of those concepts that we use to describe each other's thought and behaviour, nor the attempt to reach rational conclusions about what it would be best to do. It is because Professor Hinde ignores this larger dimension that his book, with all its many merits, is unlikely to endure.

Dr Lorenz, although he does on occasion refer to experiments of a similar brutality, draws the mass of his evidence from careful observation, even anecdote. The Haystacks hand-reared chimpanzee, Vicky, for example, could respond to such commands as "Kiss Mamma" or "Give me your hand" on one occasion. Mrs Hayes, on impulse, remarked "Kiss your foot", and Vicky, with an air of complete astonishment, obeyed. Lorenz is prepared to doubt the sanity of any "hard-nosed scientist" who doubted that, for example, a foal was enjoying itself as it jumped, bucked and kicked. He accepts, as Hinde apparently does not, that we can usually rely on our own empathetic grasp of the significance of animal behaviour. Correspondingly, he writes with a characteristic roughness of those who have lost the necessary respect for what we cannot make ourselves, and have gained an overweening enthusiasm from human technical successes. There is visible in Lorenz, as there is not in Hinde's book, the sense

of enthusiasm and delight that must start most students of animal behaviour on their way - a delight that must then come to terms with a barbaric vocabulary and experimental technique.

Lorenz has chosen to discuss the broader background in greater detail than Hinde, offering among other things a summary defence of evolutionary theory, and of the importance of studying animals in "natural" conditions, rather than merely as "deranged" products of laboratory life. He also defends himself against the charge of "anthropomorphism" in his description of animal behaviour. No one, he observes, thinks it necessary to use quotation-marks when speaking of the eyes or the legs of an insect or a crab (a similar point was made by Strato of Lampascus). Heads and brains, it seems, evolved separately, and from different beginnings, in arthropods and vertebrates: they are identified as heads on functional grounds, and an identical similarity of function obtains between the courtship and marital behaviour of, for example, geese and humans.

All modern ethology, on Lorenz's account, is founded on the discovery, by Whitman and Heinroth, of the "fixed action pattern". Certain courtship behaviour came in units, monotonously performed on cue, which were highly characteristic of each species of pigeon or waterfowl. The similarities and differences between the behaviour of birds of different species also matched the similarities and differences of morphology. Later study has broken many of these fixed patterns down into the three stages of search, recognition and action. Attempts to eliminate this category of fixed, inherited action patterns, by insisting that the animal must have learnt the pattern, fall foul, as Lorenz points out on several occasions, of the basic flaw in all Lamarckian explanations: why is it that an animal "learns" what it needs to learn? That pattern of behaviour (crudely, the learned repetition of "successful" behaviour) requires that the organism be able, functionally, to recognize success and to repeat its former behaviour. The very capacity of an individual organism to learn and to adapt is an inherited action pattern - rather is a complex of such patterns.

Lorenz's account of the manifold hierarchies of action patterns that come into play on successive occasions or in dissimilar cases, is presented with panache. He takes account of what has been thought and discovered in other disciplines and academics than the self-consciously "scientific", and recalls with affection those students of animal behaviour whose methods and conclusions have not found general favour (Uexküll, for example). Even Lorenz, though, sometimes shows something of confusion. Quoting H. S. Jennings's judgment that "were an amoeba as large as a dog, one could not hesitate ascribing to it the faculty of subjective experience", and his use of such adverbs as "placidity", "hungrily" or "greedily", Lorenz adds that it is "only the change from [the solid to the liquid state] and back again that causes the whole gamut of highly teleonomic responses whose adaptiveness rests on specific stimulus situations". Here Lorenz seems to imply that the amoeba's motions are not caused by subjective experiences, but by biochemical changes in its ectoplasm that could apply to its motions. But this in turn implies that subjective experience is being considered as a possible cause that somehow excludes biochemical causation, or even biochemical oscillations.

Why should we adopt such a neo-Cartesian viewpoint, so as to suggest that actions are caused either by subjective feelings or by objectively discernible biochemical reactions? Why assume, for that matter, that very various subjective feelings may not be biochemical, or relatively simple, finger moves, all that happens, at the successive nature of an action? ON to ON, it does not follow that it is not "my intention to write this review" that

is causing my fingers to move. My intention is embodied in a biochemical event. To suppose that the intention is a first or incompatible explanation of an outward physical show or that awareness of the keyboard, or of biochemical events would be an objective being there are no biochemical processes, though we may have no general theory to explain why "discovering" "what it is like to be a bat" in Nagel's now famous pun, merely by inspecting the pattern of the "fixed action patterns" of bat.

That there is "something it is like to be a bat", or even an amoeba, is a doctrine ingrained in most of us, and the language we unthinkingly use of ourselves and each other. Human language embodies the conviction that creatures behave and act and feel, as securely as it embodies conviction about the continuous existence of material objects, or the need for causal explanations. Even our grasp of "merely physical" nature is mediated through frankly anthropomorphic language, whether we are dealing with a recalcitrant car or subatomic particles. Without this capacity to identify with things we should be lost, but we may not take the identification altogether seriously. Physical scientists, rejecting what they mistake as an animistic Aristotelianism, have sought to explain events by referring only to non-conscious systems, to things that operate in the intentional ways, things without subjective being. Students of natural history, wishing to earn the accolade "scientists", have modelled their explanations on what they took to be the practice of physicists, possibly mechanisms modelled on physics, to systems to explain "behaviour", dismissing the judgments of folk psychology as merely naive.

As the systems that must be postulated lose their initial neatness a time to wonder whether they are simply the tools of those systems that we already know and understand as ourselves - jealousy, love, anger and depression. Consciousness itself, unless it is given a merely functional definition in terms of the immediate responses of organisms to their environment (a definition that applies equally to home computers, amoebae and human beings), remains something over and above the systems which it experiences as moods and feelings and intentions. As Aristotle said, only *noûs* (which later thinkers took to be consciousness, not "reason") seems to be more than the form of the organic system, more than we understand as causing our behaviour, and that of other animals. Its presence in us is indubitable, except to those who wish to insist that we are all no more than such bodily systems. If it is an illusion, humans and non-humans alike are "flesh, not spirit".

It is not, we no longer have any reason to deny its presence in the non-human. Folk-psychology is right after all: there are non-human intelligences in the world, though what they think of us we do not know; "every bird is an immense world of delight", as Blake said. The systems we laboriously postulate to explain its behaviour are, if we get them right, the systems that experiences as moods and feelings and desires and floods of joy. They turn out to be very much the ones we know directly in ourselves, though called by other names.

Lorenz's achievement is that he describes animal behaviour in terms broadly acceptable to "hard-nosed scientists" without letting it be supposed that this puts our non-human kindred into some quite different camp from our sensual and subjective selves. That he does not always recognize the philosophical puzzles that surround his exercise, and occasionally invokes a debatable premise, does not make this book any less worth studying. It is to be hoped that it will hasten the day when scholars of all kinds recognize the unity of the "multi-dimensional web" of humane thought, and learn to appreciate both the riches of "ordinary" language and the frequent insights of theoreticians.

The dutiful and honourable

Laurie Taylor

ROBERT DINGWALL and PHILIP LEWIS (Editors)

The Sociology of the Professions: Lawyers, Doctors and Others
314pp. Macmillan. £17.50. 0 333 30961 8

In the middle of the recent election campaign, Dr Benjamin Lee announced the reasons behind his decision to resign his post as Medical Adviser to the newly created Prisons Inspectorate:

An outside professional charged with the task of advising... must be influenced primarily by professional considerations. It is in accordance with these that he must be able to think and speak. If he finds that things are so arranged that he is prevented from doing so, he has, in my view, no option but to resign.

It is this notion of professional standards and values - the persistence of ideas of duty and public service in the material world of work - which, in various ways, absorbs the contributors to *The Sociology of the Professions*.

Self-definitions by members of the "professions" are only a starting-point for any proper enquiry into this peculiar collective identity, however. Doctors and lawyers may repeatedly tell us that they place public duty and honour before all else, but this is hardly enough for a sociologist, who wishes to reconcile the idea of "profession" with what he knows about the way in which other occupational groups conduct their lives. So it is not surprising that there is a great deal of polite squabbling throughout this book about the precise definition of "profession".

Eliot Friedson in the opening chapter opts for cultural relativism: the problem cannot be solved, he argues, by listing attributes - sense of duty, independence, monopoly of expertise - as though the notion of "profession" was generic or timeless. We must instead treat it as a changing historical concept with "particular roots in industrial nations strongly influenced by Anglo-American institutions". For although not precisely a "British disease", it is primarily an Anglo-American phenomenon which has attracted little interest in those countries where status is more related to elite education than to membership of a particular category. For Friedson,

this means moving beyond folk concepts towards a more general theory of occupation, which concentrates upon how people decide who is a professional and who is not.

This definition-mongering can become a trifle pedantic, and it is a relief to come across some practical pay-off in Maureen Cain's fascinating contribution on the general practice lawyer. Cain, like Friedson, believes that the concept of "profession", obscures more than it reveals, but she is far from satisfied with those who, in their concern to play down the professionals' own claims, end up with merely negative statements which declare, for example, that "lawyers don't help, they control: professionalism does not protect clients, it defeats them". If, writes Cain, we look at what lawyers do - at, say, the specific practices of British solicitors - we find little evidence of such a controlling function. They are, rather, engaged in "translating", in expressing a middle-class client's problems in a language in terms of which a solution can be found. It is the client who sets the objective and a good lawyer is the one who achieves it. In

this sense, lawyers are less social controllers of the masses than "intellectuals of the bourgeois class": they are "conceptive ideologists".

Any lawyer who might feel relatively pleased to be thus let off the repressive hook will find little additional comfort in the paper which immediately follows Cain's, in which Geoff Mungham and Philip Thomas head straight for the commercial underbelly of the duty solicitor scheme. "Well yes", says one of the Cardiff solicitors in their sample, reflecting on the altruism usually associated with his calling: "I should like to say I joined the scheme out of like to say I joined the scheme out of humanitarian concern, but to be honest it was with a view to increasing business." In fact, all those "professional" concerns with public service go straight out of the window, claim Mungham and Thomas, when a decline in the market means that even the most respected firms have to fight to retain business. Here is one such respondent in full flight: "A free for all is dangerous. No disrespect to my conveying brethren but I wouldn't let them loose on a guilty plea of going the wrong way round a kept left sign."

At which point in the proceedings

Marc Galanter bustles in on cue with an account of the development of "mega-lawyering" in the United States; the continuous expansion of top law firms into organizations which now house an average of over 200 lawyers. Morality is far from being the keynote of these highly paid advisers to corporations: "A good lawyer is like a good prostitute... if the price is right, you warm up your client", declares one cheery Chicago example. Here, *Blank House* has become a veritable skyscraper, as corporations battle it out with "files, experts and computers massed in assemblages beyond the span of personal experience and beyond the grasp of personal understanding". Galanter, in common with Celia Davies, who writes on public-health nursing, produces no evidence that professionals find any difficulty adapting their "altruistic" values to bureaucratic organizations.

Elsewhere *The Sociology of the Professions* is disappointing: indigestible prose and a reluctance to employ clear-cut examples from contemporary debates make parts of the text inaccessible to all but the most patient specialist. What is more, it is

almost impossible to comprehend the virtual omission from consideration of Foucault and Illich, two theorists who, albeit from different starting-points, have done so much in recent years to show how the discourse of the professional is implicated in the creation of the appropriate "subjects" for their advice and discipline: surely, a central "irony" which throws light on the general readiness of the population to assent to at least some of the professionals' high-minded claims.

Neither, except in Gordon Horobin's subtle essay on "Professional Mystery", is there anything to be found on the moral distinctions between different professionals, between lawyers, doctors, judges and perhaps "professional soldiers" or "professional hitmen". Nor is there much to be found on those other occupations which at the moment are promoting themselves as "professions". What is their likelihood of success? Even a purely semantic test makes an interesting starting-point. A professional political scientist? Perhaps. A professional sociologist? Mmmmmmm.

In the judiciary's judgment

A. W. B. Simpson

ROSEMARY PATTENDEN

The Judge, Discretion, and the Criminal Trial
299pp. Oxford University Press. £20. 0 19 825373 7

It is, I think, very generally appreciated that a judge in a common law criminal trial has an extensive power to choose, within a widely defined range, the particular sentence to impose on a convicted person. Thus when there is a manslaughter conviction the theoretical possibilities run from an absolute discharge through such alternatives as probation up to imprisonment for life. Lawyers call this freedom of choice "discretion", and in relation to sentencing, the extent of an English judge's discretion astonishes lawyers from other systems, where the law regulates judicial power more closely. It is perhaps less well known how extensive are the other areas of judicial discretion in the course of criminal trials with relation to matters

of evidence and procedure, and these are the subject-matter of this book, which is based on English and Australian materials. For example, judges have discretion to conduct a trial in the absence of the accused, to exclude prejudicial evidence, to reject a plea of guilty, to exclude improperly obtained evidence, to reprove counsel and witnesses, to exclude certain forms of questioning, and, perhaps most significant of all, to sum up the case with indications of the way the jury ought, in the judge's view, to decide the case. Many questions arise out of such discretions. How extensive are they? Is there this or that discretion at all? What, if any, principles govern their exercise? What, if anything, can be done if the judge exceeds the limits of the discretion? But more crudely by way of example, what can be done if a judge, exercising his undoubted discretion to sum up the case to the jury, grumbles hideously in doing so, to indicate his view of a certain defence witness (as happened in one case in my experience)?

Much of the discussion in this scholarly and highly professional study is necessarily very technical, but

certain important general issues of wide political significance underlie the discussion. The ideal of the rule of law stands in fundamental opposition to political arrangements in which there exist wide areas of legally conferred discretionary power, yet it is neither possible nor, if it were, desirable to carry enthusiasm for that ideal to the point of attempting to cover all situations by rule, and thus wholly exclude discretion. A study of discretion is essentially therefore a study of the degree to which the ideal of the rule of law has been sacrificed to other claims, and it is clear that in the case of the criminal trial that sacrifice has been taken to very considerable lengths. If of course our Crown Court judges were philosophers and saints perhaps this move to a government of men, not laws, might not be a worry, but that is not the position. The same phenomenon - the use of law to confer that discretionary power to which law is in some fundamental sense in opposition - is a general feature of the legal history of the past century and a half, and the consequence has been, as Rosemary Pattenden points out in her preface, that "Discretion has become a

subject 'à la mode', extensively studied in relation to administrative law, to family law and to sentencing.

Her book extends the treatment, but what perhaps the whole subject now calls for is a historical study of what might be called the bureaucratization of the legal system. Perhaps only through such a study will we be able to tell when 1984 has arrived or will arrive. The values of legalism still to some degree condition the thinking of professional lawyers, and, particularly in relation to administrative law, a very considerable development of the notion of controlled discretion has taken place. The world of the criminal trial is traditionally somewhat primitive, and the arrangements for appellate supervision crude; this book may, by drawing attention generally to the subject, have some influence for the good.

The Crimes of the First Fleet Convicts by John Cobley (324pp. Angus & Robertson. £6.95. 0 207 1462 8) contains a register of the crimes and sentences of the First Fleet convicts who left England in 1787 to establish a penal colony in New South Wales.



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J. K. L. Walker

ANTHONY POWELL

O, How The Wheel Becomes It!
143pp. Heinemann. £6.95.
0 434 59925 5

In this, his first novel for eight years (and his first self-contained work of fiction since *What's Become of Waring*, published in 1959), Anthony Powell quickly gets down to business. O. F. H. Shadbold, the elderly man of letters whose last months form the substance of the novel, reflects that the image of the wheel in Ophelia's "enigmatic cry" (which gives the work its title) may be seen, too, as the "menace of the roulette-board" and, by extension, Powell notes, "often symbolizes the manner in which nobody can tell where things are going to lead, nor to what purpose they may be twisted". Here at once is the gravely contemplative Powell tone, recalling the opening image of *The Music of Time* sequence, of the workmen round the brazier and the associations for Nicholas Jenkins with Poussin's painting.

The turn of the wheel brings Shadbold, after many decades, involvement in the affairs of a school and university friend, Cedric Winterwade, killed during the Second World War. Shadbold describes his own emergence as a literary figure during the 1920s with a play ("printed on handmade paper by The Forte et Dare Press"), two novels and a study of one of the Cavalier poets, "treated with gross inaccuracy by a reviewer (his sole one)" in the *Times Literary Supplement*. His vanity is, however, jolted when Winterwade (by then working in the City) also publishes a novel, *The Welsons of Omdurman Terrace*, a tale of London lower-middle-class life, in which "a dreadful breeziness of tone was interspersed

with extravagant sentimentalities". Shadbold is gratified to find the novel is so bad and commends it in a review for breaking away from "the constricted world of intellectuals and their tedious love affairs".

Such an affair is Shadbold's own passion for Isolde Upjohn, a model who personifies "the current fashion in le sex-appeal; figure of infinite slenderness; next to no breasts; permanent expression of pained surprise". Like that other Powellian high-society Pamela Widmerpool, Isolde Upjohn is, it later appears, "contumaciously frigid and uncooperative in bed". This is a disability that Shadbold himself never encounters, as his status never rises above that of the many other young men hanging about her Chelsea flat. Isolde marries and disappears from his life, as too does Winterwade. Shadbold himself first marries a gamine actress who fails to return from "a ferment of theatrical activities aimed at entertaining troops", and then settles down with the red-headed Prudence who writes best-selling detective novels under the pen-name of Prosperine Gunning; her preference in their domestic life for the appellation "Pros" emphasized status as writer rather than wife.

These seeds, planted in Shadbold's youth and lying dormant for years, bring forth a strange crop in his old age. A diary kept by Winterwade until his death comes into the hands of Shadbold's publisher, Jason Price, who prevails upon Shadbold to decipher and edit it. In the course of this task Shadbold discovers that Winterwade conducted a brief affair with Isolde Upjohn, culminating in a weekend in Paris, at the time of his own infatuation for her. Overcome by jealousy and by envy of the unexpected literary quality of the diary, Shadbold returns it to Price as unpublishable. "One whole

fact of memory had been dislocated . . . The desecration of myth . . . was something not to be condoned in any circumstance."

Winterwade's ghost, however, is not to be so easily laid. Horace Grigham, an English don and a former husband of Prudence Shadbold, shows interest in *The Welsons of Omdurman Terrace* during a visit by Shadbold to address an undergraduate society. Later, while Prudence is away, a well-preserved Isolde Upjohn, now transmuted into a Mrs Abdullah, turns up at the cottage shortly before a television crew under the command of the egregious Rod Cubbage (whose "altogether unusual vanity . . . was sufficiently overpowering to consign him to the verges of sanity") arrives to film an interview with Shadbold. Using Isolde as a lever, Cubbage prides out the details of the past, and Shadbold finds himself confessing to an admiration for Winterwade's novel and to his youthful but unconsummated passion for Isolde. Malicious editing ensures that, when the interview later appears on the screen, "a very different 'image' of Shadbold [is] presented from that

disseminated by himself for several decades". The novel ends with Shadbold's resolve to ask Jason Price for another look at the diaries, only to learn that they have been returned to Winterwade's family and destroyed. The news proves too much for Shadbold, and in a talismanic Price is seen delivering the panegyric at his memorial service.

After the amplitude of *The Music of Time*, O, How The Wheel Becomes It! may seem spare to the point of emaciation. The literary world which Shadbold inhabits appears but a shadow of that presented with such delicate relish in the earlier work, and Shadbold himself, compared with such grotesques as St John Clarke, Trapnel and J. G. Quiggan, has suffered only a quick dip in the acid-bath of Powell's irony. Within the novel's short compass, Horace Grigham, the Eng Lit don chomping on his own jargon, and the dreadful Rod Cubbage are dangerously close to caricature. One misses the broad, smooth-flowing river of Powell's prose, with those dangerous hidden currents and rocks, as well as the gossipy tolerance of and

delight in human variety which mark *The Music of Time* such a cult work with the English Præsidium and its candidate members, who were both material and its victims. Inevitably, these terms, without a Nick Jenkins interpreter, a figure such as Shadbold fails to charm, and the moral turpitude that leads to his fall may seem too plainly connected to a figure from the past, Winterwade, who remains for ever off-stage and can exercise little hold upon the reader's imagination.

Yet Anthony Powell, of all writers, can hardly be suspected of lack of craft. The ghostlier figure, perhaps, the better to spin the wheel for Time's revenge. It may be that as readers we should cease secretly to sigh for his great harmonies and praise Mr Powell, in his seventy-eighth year, for attempting a new genre: his *Le Quartet*, perhaps? As he perfects his technique, there is no doubt cause to hope for more genial tunes and a dash of decoration. It would have been a pity, for example, to have been allowed inside Isolde Upjohn's flat in the days when you had to go to Soho to do because there was nowhere admirable in Chelsea. Not that there is now.

All this words

Linda Taylor

DAVID HIGGINS

Bornholm Night-Ferry
175pp. Allison and Busby. £7.95.
0 8531 498 4

In his preface to *A Lover's Discourse*, Roland Barthes wrote:

the lover's discourse is today of an extreme solitude. This discourse is spoken, perhaps, by thousands of subjects . . . but warranted by no one. . . . Once a discourse is thus driven by its own momentum into the backwater of the "unreal", exiled from all reality, it has no recourse but to become the site, however exigent, of an affirmation. That affirmation is, in short, the subject of the book which begins here . . .

It is also the subject of Aidan Higgins's new novel.

Barthes dealt with his subject through an explication of key words: absence, anxiety, waiting, catastrophe, fulfilment and so on. Higgins deals with it through the correspondence of his two protagonists, Finn Fitzgerald and Elin Mastrander. Their adulterous love affair is compared to a disease which has shaking periods like a fever. It is an invention of words, and necessitates the inventing of words: "Often I feel . . . that we outbeat each other in our letters . . . all this words, this meeting-again difficulty, risky, maybe impossible," says Danish Elin, in her slightly stilted English. It makes them garrulous in the letters and often brutally tactless in the few reported occasions when they meet. Most of all, though, it produces a separate world - "we will have to create our own

country: the 'Opposite Land'" says Finn, picking up a phrase coined by Elin.

Elin struggles to explain the unreality of their discourse to Finn: Still looking for the right dictionary. I would like very much to give you that: an outline of our love language, the opposite language, with secret meaning hidden in the appearance. Like the wise-men-middle-age language . . . I feel our love more and more exclusive, belonging to very few points.

There is, of course, no dictionary of words that could help - it is not so much the differences between Danish and English that count for the lovers as those between "Elinish" and "Finnish". Elin, the poet, is constantly sharper about this isolation than Finn, the novelist. After a meeting in London, for example, he writes: "The only 'disappointment' I found, as you warned me, here was your deafness to what I said sometimes, because I suppose you were thinking in Danish, heard only sounds." Elin replies: "About my deafness: Yes, in a way I had to think in Danish now and then - but more (rather) I have to think in 'Finnish'. And you have to think in 'Finnish'. Our dictionary belongs to the flesh, my love." But in their, often self-imposed, prostration rather than poverty (one accepts them apart), exile from one another, flesh is a commodity they lack. The poem for Finn and Elin (as for all lovers?) is that their "conversation" is a series of exchanged monologues - "My letters are monologues below the actions, my life is dialogues, action," says Elin. Embroiled in the attempt "to save our dream", however, she does not always want to see that the solitude of the lover's discourse is its irredeemable essence.

seller: power to their elbows. Yet this novel runs through more social chatter than one has altogether time for; more chic schools (inaccurately rendered, I think; Brigandiers do not generally send daughters to Beethoven) than the plot can justify; and, most damaging of all, a villain heroine to whom is shown consistent condescension.

If she is going to be murderous - which she is - then give her credit for it. She should be frightening. There is an impression that for the author the most appalling thing about her is her vulgarity. Poisoners should get full due for being poisonous, rather than be castigated for calling members of the family by two names, living in Wimbledon and serving the wrong food.

This could be a settling of debts more private to the author than public to the reader. Presumably most people go

Within Higgins's epistolary framework, beneath the fluctuating Finn and Elin's affair, conventional novelistic ingredients are thin: the story is that of the love affair, other characters - wife, husband, children - are at best hazy, the plot lines in the lovers' arbitrarily argued reasons for doing or not doing. It is in the nature of the epistolary form that the "action" takes place retrospectively. Higgins further complicates this by beginning with Finn's diary account of their eventual visit to Bornholm and ending with a similar account of their initial meeting in Spain. The more important action, for Finn and Elin, takes place inside their heads: the dream of Bornholm (increasingly a euphemism for the fulfilment of their love - "I believe that Bornholm is full of promises," says Elin, at the beginning of their five-year correspondence. "I will protect you and you me. I will give you life, you will give me rest") and the idea that they can cure each other's sickness. (As an introductory note, Higgins playfully gives a dictionary definition for *Bornholm Disease*: "an epidemic virus infection characterized by pain round the base of the chest.")

Here as in his previous fiction, Higgins's strength lies in the language with which he evokes complex feelings. There can be a kind of heaviness in such an expository narrative, but the interplay of character or by the darker implications of, say, Richardson's plot below the surface at times one longs for more action and less "affirmation". But as a demonstration of the language of love (and the nature of love), of two people trying and inspiring themselves and each other by their intense monologuing, *Bornholm Night-Ferry* is a rewarding piece of writing.

Sequentially scientific

Nigel Wheale

J. H. PRYNNNE

Poems

319pp. Agnau 2. Distributed by DS (The Book Shop). 14 Peto Place, London N1 6 1Z (paperback, £7.50).
0 907954 002

Agnau 2 editions must be congratulated for publishing J. H. Prynnne's *Poems* and making his singular writings more generally available. The book reprints twelve separate volumes published between 1968 and 1979, and includes twenty-seven pages of previously uncollected poems: one of these gives more cause for reflection than is usual even with Prynnne's work, because it is composed in rimes.

It would be possible to locate Prynnne's work within the English poetry of the last twenty years by reference to techniques employed, to particular pressures or attitudes, or to groupings, but when all this is done it remains unique. There has never been a poetry quite like this: even as it actively requires the reader to look for precedents and comparisons. Whole areas of inquiry about the nature of "Modernism" are opened up by Prynnne's poetry; but this does not mean that it is trapped within the narrow confines of the twentieth-century avant-garde. There are connections with certain aspects of medieval poetry, with the tradition of the Renaissance lyric, and with the inter-relations of memory and perception in Roman Catholicism.

The renovations worked by Prynnne's

a turning stone mottled and veined, a pebble alone, an eternity of shoes.

Just as that last line moves from the apparent finality of "a pebble alone" to the implied progression of "an eternity of shoes", Smith himself moves from a throwaway existentialism to more complex intuitions. Here again the move to America was opportune, for it coincided with the revival of interest in primitive and archaic poetry that culminated in the publication of Jerome Rothenberg's seminal anthology, *Technicians of the Sacred*. In "From the Nahua" Smith adapts a pre-Columbian myth, and he incorporates Red Indian kennings into "An inscription of the crying woman"; but particular borrowings are important only as indications of a deeper influence on his poetic language. When he writes of accepting my birthday.

How the shadows move in at such news and are strange in the light. This feather left for his marker my brother the crow had dropped by the goalpost seems a dead man's finger keeping his page in the unfinished biography.

— he is re-entering, if only for the space of a metaphor, a universe that is a unity, where the poet can discern his own myth taking shape in correspondences, reflections, fore-shadows. Poetry ceases to be what is so often in England, an art of framed observations: it becomes the spelling out of a selfhood, "a language to speak to myself".

That spelling out is dramatically intensified in *Fox Running*, a long poem published separately in a handsome pamphlet and included in slightly revised and extended form in *The Poet Reclining*. A marital breakdown sends Fox running to London.

His mouth repeating how she was his sparrow. How she was his woman, faithless as the wind turns anywhere, he'd been better bedded with a wild or wedded to the water.

The poem is a brilliant recreation of a man under stress encountering the city. Rapid, compulsive rhythms create flicker-pictures of the Underground and the seedier districts, in which Fox glimpses his double, the shadow he could so easily become:

Facis mentioning defeat saying

bankruptcy desertion failure redundancy lost bottle. Their light that had gone or never lit or they burned now on the lamp oil of necessity the pure oil of aging euphoria.

Self and shadow come so close that the poem arouses, in the ancient phrase, pity and terror. All that separates them is the survival instinct, whatever it is in Fox that "speaks / from the lengthening floor / of his blood his conviction / not me not me Jack".

Smith sustains "Fox Running" through forty pages by his control of pace, and by his ability to catch Fox's shifts of consciousness, freaks of humour, and all his different tones of voice. These are a novelist's skills, and in the "The Eli Poems" Smith puts them to full use, creating the fiction of a poet haunted by dreams of an eighteenth-century mill girl, seduced by her landlord and dying in childbirth. Familiar enough material: documentary poems, reclaiming working-class history in the spirit of E. P. Thompson, have become almost a cottage industry in recent years. Documentary can be both tender and tart, as Jeffrey Wainwright's "1815" shows. But the freedom of fiction allows Ken Smith to come even closer in feeling. The girl's own voice is released: "looking for brains, / I here's brats, / I go speak / with your wife / I old man". Eli, the landlord, has his own voice, but increasingly, in their obsession with the girl, Eli and the poet seem to merge. The result is an unusual immediacy, even in the narrative voice:

Turning hour after hour the musing wheel rode through you

And he saw you now he'd think twice . . .

At last you saw your own body's shafts and the driving muscle between them print out its track, the child leapt to their hands

and the wheel rolled out of you, pushing the small life from you

"The clearing" completely fuses fiction and lyric, mingling the struggles of an immigrant farmer in Minnesota with one of Smith's own epiphanies, the hawk of "Hawk Vision" who in a moment of liberation "diving / somehow

upward" vanished but now returns "hungry, / weary, wrong-muscled, / grey bird of my death". The fusion is deliberate: it is Smith's way of relating his own life to the unity of lives, of reaffirming that he is "a cry among cries".

The Poet Reclining is an impressive selection, combining one long poem and no less than five sequences with a host of fine shorter pieces. The diversity of Smith's talent alone would recommend it above most recent volumes; but the book's real strength lies in its unity, the echoing of image by image, the reflection of persona upon persona. The poems should be read in their entirety, the hectic and the reflective, the tender and the scabrous, as one pilgrim's unholy progress towards what he calls, nevertheless, "the kingdom".

Abel Baker, which looks like off-cuts from *Fox Running*, was in fact written earlier. It offers little more than bar talk, affectionate parodies of old men's reminiscence, the occasional surreal extension of slang. Briefly the notes in a wallet, "one lady with a lamp / one iron duke and one / discoverer of gravity" become like tarot cards, imprinted with collective symbols, enigmatic guides. *Burned Books* shows signs of hasty construction. The central conceit, the burning down of President Perdu's world library, could have proved as versatile a metaphor for the decline of the West as Enzensberger's *The Sinking of the Titanic*. But there are too many whimsies, flights of the fancy rather than the imagination. The library metaphor is forgotten for pages at a time, then intrudes into a prose poem that would have been better without it.

Here Smith's demotic becomes a scaling down of civilization's pretensions. In "Recitation at the burned books" Perdu takes "a handful / of rainy ashes / of crimped halfburned paper" and asks "what chance of nirvana for this / wet rubbishy fistful?" The colloquial challenge of that "wet rubbishy fistful" rings out; but it rings all the more true because it is only one element in Smith's style, a style that is then able to move on to encompass Perdu's longit-

to be merely a grassblade, the singular star of the speedwell, maybe a dead flecked by the reeds, his brothers.

the privacy of commonplace routine; they consider breathing, walking, buying, in the light of an ethical intelligence, by which all experience is put to the question: "Vain to ask, you see all / there is?"

The image of the nomad was persistent in the earlier work where it was an emblem of exposed decision, of the lightness of all meaning's affiliation to experience:

No one harms these people: they are sacred and have no weapons. They all or pass, in the form of divine song, they are free in the spirit form of displacement. They change their shape, being of the essence as a figure of extent. . . .

The tribal nomadism of the Scythians becomes an occasion to explore the nature of settled economy, and the shaman Aristes, a shifter, is treasured precisely because of his free engagements with the nature of value. By comparison, the grumpy warrior bands who figure in *News of Warring Clans* (1977) are no longer visionary; their activities have become analogies for the martial shadow play that currently hangs over the western hemisphere, a phoney conflict which is none the less deadly for that.

Should these poems be other than they are, might they to their advantage be more directly expressed? The question seems an impertinence, because of the complicity between what is said and the manner of saying. The poems work at the limits of sense; but it was once said that "the more important poetry of the future is unlikely to be simple", and that could well meet the present case.

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Played 40, won 20, lost 20

E. C. Riley

VLADIMIR NABOKOV

Lectures on Don Quixote
Edited by Fredson Bowers
219pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£16.50.
0 297 78230 4

Nabokov on *Don Quixote* – the idea is fascinating to anyone who admires them both. What will the cunning cosmopolitan artificer have to say about his Spanish predecessor and the book of which Lionel Lincoln observed that it contained within it "the whole potentiality of the genre"? Other novelists have sometimes been quicker than academic critics to spot things in the book, or have seen them more clearly. Unamuno, Kafka, Thomas Mann, Borges and Graham Greene have. Will Nabokov? Let's see.

While teaching at Cornell, where he lectured on modern novelists from Jane Austen to Joyce, Nabokov was invited to give a course of lectures at Harvard in the spring semester, 1952. At Harry Levin's suggestion he agreed to start with *Don Quixote*. He prepared this assignment very thoroughly, first writing out a summary of every chapter, with long quotations. This was the basis for the six lectures which make up the principal part of the present book, the compiling and editing of which have been well done by Fredson Bowers. Nabokov's quotations from *Don Quixote* are from Samuel Putnam's 1949 translation. Presumably because it was more easily available to students, the fastidious master of prose and expert translator chose this rather clumsy version in preference to J. M. Cohen's often no less inaccurate but more readable one.

The nucleus of the lectures apparently was an analysis of the structure based on Don Quixote's victories and defeats. They are entertainingly presented as a tennis match, with the unexpected final score of twenty games won by Don Quixote and twenty lost. This is an interesting approach, although one could question

the inclusion or exclusion of a small number of incidents as "games". (If one counts Quixote's persuading Sancho to be his squire, why not the argument with the Canon of Toledo?) More important, though, Nabokov does absolutely nothing with these results except express amazement at "this perfect balance of victory and defeat . . . in what seems such a disjointed haphazard book". He puts it down to "a secret sense of writing, the harmonizing intuition of the artist". This is not the only time intuitive genius is summoned in a last-minute bid to save the novel from being a mess.

There is a touch of Pnin in these conscientious lectures. At the same time, the lecturer, giving away no magic-circle secrets, uses his writer's licence to be the expected *enfant terrible*, and *épater l'universitaire*. He has done some homework and read such commentators as Bell, Schvill, Duffield, Groussac and Joseph Wood Krutch. He has read and appreciated Madariaga in translation, but apparently knows nothing of Castro or even Ortega y Gasset on the *Quixote*. Without Spanish he could not have read Casado's brilliant new commentary either, but he could have read Paul Hazard's judicious study, both were published in 1949. With few distinguished exceptions like these, Cervantes studies were at a low ebb in the early 1950s. Nabokov, to his credit, was quick to shake himself free of the prevailing sentimentalization of the work, and scornfully rejected the effusions of Aubrey Bell. But he was less ready to cast off prejudices of other kinds. To the author of *Strong Opinions*, for whom Freud was always the "Viennese quack", Spain meant the Church, the Inquisition and gloomy Philip II, a view enthusiastically endorsed in Guy Davenport's foreword, published thirty years later. It is not easy to assess the impact of Nabokov's reading of *Don Quixote* today, after the boom years in Cervantes in the United States. But to claim it in 1983 as "an event in modern criticism" is in my view unsustainable. Had the author of these lectures not been Nabokov, who would have

published them now? Since there will be no shortage of reverent reviews, I shall lay more stress on the shortcomings than might otherwise be thought fair.

The author of *Laughter in the Dark* berates the *Quixote* for its "cruelty". He seems to find knockabout and slapstick incompatible with comedy, and, oblivious to the fact that exaggeration is essential to farce and the place where it parts company with realism, he takes the whacks and drubbings very literally-mindedly. Of course there is an element of cruelty present, as there is in Punch and Judy, circus clowning, Chaplin comedy and Bugs Bunny cartoons, but it must be taken in conjunction with the unnaturalistic resilience of the victims. There may be too much knockabout in Part One, as Cervantes himself became aware, but it is far from being the only kind of humour in the book. Moreover, excessive sensitivity about violence starts to look a little suspect. Nabokov sees two parodies of the "strappado" torture (in I, 43 and II, 30). In the first case he simply misreads the incident: he has Don Quixote hanging by the hand from the window, with his full weight, for hours instead of just a few minutes. In the second, his imagination subverts a splendid piece of buffoonery: Sancho, with a foot caught in the stirrup, falling off his ass in front of the Duke and Duchess, while Don Quixote tumbles off Rocinante. And what he means by asserting that Don Quixote gets very close to having a sand-and-water enema administered I cannot think. It is not without interest in the novel that more than once a first narrative reference to some walloping or the like corresponds to the way the outraged victim might have described it, and a second modified view of it is

given later (there is a good example in I, 17). There is a silent gear-change here in Part Two, after which the reader is aware that hardly is there any longer even poetic justice in the micky being taken out of Don Quixote. But this is not the *Quixote* of yore.

At least by implication, Nabokov measures *Don Quixote* against the classic realist novels which came after it, and which he understood so well. Apparently having little knowledge of what came before, he is not in a strong position to assess the *Quixote*'s originality. "Medieval" tends to be a pejorative adjective, and he shows no understanding of it. He considers that the Priest confuses the issue by finding some of the chivalric romances to be worth saving. On the other hand, he cannily notes that Cervantes's interest in the chivalric is not really a moral concern but used as a "literary device to propel . . . his story". He largely dismisses the romantic stories in the *Quixote* as fantastic, and the pastoral ones as artificial and unbelievable. Arcadia has also had a bad influence on the landscape descriptions – "tame", "dead", "trite" and "typical of the so-called Italian Renaissance in letters".

Nothing about those roads of Spain which Flaubert saw throughout the book, although they are nowhere described in it.

It is a relief to find the author of *Pale Fire* and *Invitation to a Beheading* noticing some of the tricky handling of levels of fiction, surrogate authors and Cervantes's treatment of the text as work in progress. The section on "Chronicles" is perhaps the best in the book, although Nabokov might have followed through much further than he does. Gratifyingly, he discovers the suggestion of a *doppelgänger* in the fictitious Don Quixote whom the

Knight of the Mirrors (Hal) claimed to have vanquished in combat. The shadowy threat to the hero's identity takes on substance when the spurious Quixote of Avellaneda's sequel comes into being. Then, with remarkable unsuspiciously the author of *Invitation to a Beheading* wishes Cervantes had made the two Quixotes meet in combat. This would have promoted the pseudo-Quixote to a level of fictional substantiality which Cervantes was most careful to deny him. However, in his conclusion Nabokov does see what multiple personalities Don Quixote embodies.

He is by no means wholly unsympathetic to *Don Quixote*. He is generous in praise of the dialogue and ultimately of the characterization of the Knight, whose figure has so grown in posterity, the parody becoming a paragon. The lectures are disappointing mostly because they miss much and fill the voids with descriptive summary. A few aperçus apart, the author of *Invitation to a Beheading* accepts the then conventional charge of artless composition, endless trite blunders, weakness for artificial Italianate novellas, etc. He wanted his reading to be free of the accretions of pious cant that had grown around *Don Quixote* over the years. He succeeds in that; but it is not enough. He says in his Conclusion: "As a thinker Cervantes's mind is both directed and shackled by the classical and academic ideas of his age. As a creator, he enjoys the freedom of genius." This prompts the thought that even free-ranging creative geniuses of the twentieth century need to remember that when they parody as critics they too are thinkers – let them find themselves, like Professor Pnin, on board the wrong train with an obsolete timetable.

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Delivered out of bondage

A. J. Close

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University Press. £30.50.
0 691 06521 7

Alban K. Forcione, whose sheer output compels the reader's admiration, has published another major study of Cervantes: an investigation of the humanist, and specifically the Erasmus, ideological background of four of the *novelas ejemplares*: *El celoso extremeño*, *La gitanilla*, *El licenciado Vidriera*, *La fuerza de la sangre*. It is an ambitious book: in more senses than one, a latter-day *Pensamiento de Cervantes*, by which Professor Forcione is self-consciously much influenced. Forcione attempts to rescue the Américo Castro of that work from the retractorist mauling to which he was subjected by the later Américo Castro, and also to follow the lead given by Marcel Batillon in his *Erasmus et l'Espagne*. That is, Forcione attempts to present Cervantes as spiritual/intellectual heir to the progressive mainstream of Christian humanist thought. At the same time, he stresses Cervantes's detachment from the Spanish ideological climate in which he lived, especially from what Forcione calls "the literature of *desengaño*" (Quevedo's satire, the picaresque novel, Calderón's *La vida es sueño*), and characterizes Cervantes as a "Lutheran colour". Like Castro too, Forcione depicts an ambivalent Cervantes: divided between an impulse to affirm and to question a normative essence in human nature, to omit moral evaluations and undermine them, to operate literary conventions with enthusiasm and set them in a self-questioning frame. These dichotomies more or less correspond to the division between "romance" and "comedy" in Cervantes's works, e.g. between *Peregrina*, *Sigismunda* and *Don Quixote*. (Unlucky Castro: he credits Cervantes with authentic sympathy, albeit not unproblematic, with the religious and moral values of the Counter-Reformation.)

Forcione's main thesis is that Cervantes shared Erasmus's optimism

vision of human potentialities and freedom, his aspiration to sanctify life, his tendency to give value to the institutions of family and state, and the natural faculties and affections expressed through them. With Erasmus, he denied the pessimistic asceticism of Augustinian derivation which treated human nature as hopelessly weak, corrupt, and sinful, affirmed the utter helplessness of man before Divine Providence, and allowed him merely the constrained freedom of self-denial, born of terror of damnation (p81: this, astonishingly, is said of Calderón!). Thus, in *El celoso extremeño*, Cervantes offers for most of the story something like the view of human nature espoused by his Spanish contemporaries; however, in the last few pages, especially in the latter Leonoras and Carriales a moment of adult moral freedom – a redeeming victory over the "demonic" and "animal" forces by which they have been enslaved hitherto. Here, one might say, the spirit of Erasmus triumphs over that of *desengaño*. In *El licenciado Vidriera*, even while yielding to his naughty penchant for the forbidden fruits of satire, Cervantes offers a caricature of the dogmatically denunciatory and misanthropic spirit of *desengaño*, which was emerging at about that time in the "nightmarish fantasies" of Quevedo and the "desolate vision" of the picaresque novel. The protagonist of this *novela* is the embodiment of stultified curiosity and misapplied knowledge; and the critical point of him is inspired by Erasmus's warning about the uncharitable misanthropy of the Cyclops in his *Enchiridion* and by his ideal of learning as *humanitas*.

As in his earlier book, *Cervantes's Christian Romance*, Forcione approaches Cervantes via the genre of "romance" and "treats him as a sophisticated, self-conscious exponent of its 'codes'": its recurrent archetypes and symbolism. Here the inspiration of Northrop Frye's *The Secular Scripture* is apparent. Consequently, Forcione tends to treat the text of these *novelas* not just as having a literal sense, to be interpreted by the canons of verbal ambiguity, but also as containing a systematic network of images and situations which acquire symbolic significance thanks to their affiliation to the "codes". Thus, if the heroine of

La fuerza de la sangre has a stormy passage in the first half of the *novela* (she is raped in a dark bedroom, *inter alia*), and arrives serenely at the haven of betrothal to the "demonic" knight (amorous images of light, blood gilt and redness, and so forth), this can be seen as a re-enactment of the conventional transition in romance from bondage to deliverance, the supremacy of demonic forces to their defeat, with all that this portentously implies. Here, specifically, it implies that *La fuerza de la sangre* is a re-enactment of the miracle story, especially of the legend of St. Leonora of Toledo.

Forcione's book is over-long, some four hundred pages of text, with argument tends to overflow in copious detailed footnotes. This is symptomatic not just of failure to use the pruning-knife, but also of a lack of sense of proportion and critical judgment. *La gitanilla* – a graceful, stylish, and witty romantic story – is surely not so fraught with ideological significance as to warrant extensive exposition of Erasmus's doctrines of marriage, the humanist conception of fallen and perverted nature, Renaissance scepticism and relativism, amongst other matters. Moreover, it is not at all clear that these are the natural or relevant literary and intellectual connections to make in relation to the *novela*. Even if one is prepared to gloss over the acute problems involved in asserting Cervantes's familiarity with the works of Erasmus (mostly on the Spanish Index by 1559); and to accept that the familiarity is general, not specific, absorbed at an early age, and thoroughly assimilated, all Cervantes's views on life, one is left with the snag that the argument (as discussed by Forcione at length) is coincidental and tenuous, and can be more plausibly be found to obtain between Cervantes and such impossibly orthodox Catholics as Fray Luis de León, not to mention the exponents of the literature of *desengaño*.

My final feeling about this book is one of regret. There is much to admire in Professor Forcione's work: his range of reading, the frequent perceptive observations, and the ability to make imaginative connections. Here the talents have been mobilized in a

Dreaming amid the ruins

Laurence Whitehead

JOAN DIDION

Salvador
108pp. Chatto and Windus/Hogarth
Press. £6.95.
0 7011 3912 9

Joan Didion visited El Salvador in June 1982. During her short stay she met a number of prominent figures such as President Magaña, US Ambassador Hinton, and a Salvadoran painter named Victor Barriere (grandson of the country's most notorious dictator). She failed to meet Colonel Beltrán Luna, whose helicopter crashed while she waited nervously for his return from operations in the "contested zone" of Morazan. She mentions no meetings with the insurgents, or with Catholic leaders, or with either beneficiaries or victims of the land reform. She records a few encounters with ordinary Salvadoreans but it seems that such contacts were either distant or sinister. Thus her book is peopled with newspapermen, television reporters, embassy personnel, the occasional nun or taxi-driver, and the vestiges of the Salvadoran intelligentsia. Beyond that small circle of acquaintances (about whom she writes evocatively – though not charitably) her *Salvador* is immersed in darkness, brutality and fear.

To underline the point she opens with a rather obvious tribute to Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (or perhaps to *Apocalypse Now*, which was showing at the Hotel Camino Real during her stay). But her portraits are not of pioneers from western civilization who have "gone native" and so slipped into a savagery not authorized from back home. On the contrary, her American informants have twenty-four-hour direct-dial access to their congressmen back home; the savagery emanates at least as much from Miami and the School of the Americas as from San Francisco. The Americas as Managua; the cultural reference-point is Hollywood (with live bullets and expendable extras) rather than the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. Although there are also some analogies with Graham Greene's *Halt or V.S. Naipaul's* Argentina, the closest precursor to Didion's *Salvador* is the Chile of Costa-Gavras.

Like the film *Missing* this book is probably destined to reach a mass American audience that has never before made the imaginative leap from the centre to the periphery of the "Free World". Because of its timing and likely impact *Salvador* must be judged for its political as well as its undoubted literary merits. One reason why it will have a political effect is because the characters are recognizable to ordinary Americans. There are no Marxist activists, no articulate landowners, no impassioned clerics, and there is no clash of ideologies in Ms Didion's *Salvador*. Most of her contacts were the allies and dependents of the US embassy, the people relied on by Washington to constitute a "liberal centre" and somehow dispel the need for choice between radical left and neanderthal right. Didion's political message is simple, and devastating for American policy-makers – at this "centre" there are only lies, fantasies and fear. She sees no hope for Washington's protégés, and she scorns the rhetoric deployed by her government. But she says not a word in defence of the insurgents.

With the disinherited

Gordon Brotherston

VICTOR PERERA AND ROBERT D. BRUCE

The Lacandon Mayas of the Mexican Rain Forest
311pp. Hutchinson. £12.95.
0 316 69916 0

An Oklahoma Scot and a Guatemalan Sephardi, respectively, Robert D. Bruce and Victor Perera converge on the Lacandon Maya, "lords of Palenque", as on the touchstone of the earth's fate. In the nature of their interest in the survivors of the Classic Maya, who built cities like Palenque and Yaxchilan that still stand in and near Lacandon territory, goes far beyond the anthropological and literary, as these disciplines are usually understood and practised. Rather, the authors are to be numbered among those for whom studying the first nations of America amounts to a stark political and ideological commitment, an unconditional taking of sides in their defence, and a last possible chance of diagnosing, in time, the insanity of Western man.

Setting the tone in his introduction to this defence of the Lacandon, Bruce characterizes the much-vaunted European discovery and conquest of America as "one of the most immoral and criminal offences that man ever perpetrated against a man". More scholarly and longer in the field than his friend Perera, he carefully locates the Lacandon in the catalogue of incessant depredation that began with Columbus and which today threatens to reduce these Indians of Middle America to the circumstances he witnessed as a child north of the border, in Oklahoma.

For his part, taking up the story in the form of a journal that runs from January 1977 to March 1981, Perera details the particular threats that today face the tiny Lacandon communities (only 400 people in all) at Naba and Mensabek, with their crystalline lakes, centuries-old trees, and traffic with jaguar, snake and quetzal. For they are being invaded by Seventh-Day Adventists, mahogany loggers, cattle-

ranched who further despoil the forest for pasture, and oil prospectors, one following the other in relentless succession. At the start of his journal Perera confesses his first impulse to side with the Lacandon Maya, and when, still a child, he encountered five of them in cages at the Guatemala National Fair in 1938.

What lends strength to this particular testimony of "criminal offense" against native America is the way it interweaves undeniable fact with the words of the Lacandon themselves, notably that of Chan K'in, the elder or shaman at Naba, to whom Bruce and Perera dedicate the book. Through Chan K'in's stories of genesis, war with the underworld, the *milpa* (maize garden), jaguar and other metamorphoses, we are put in touch not just with another economy and religion but with the ethic and consciousness which these presuppose. If for Bruce and Perera studying and living with the Lacandon is a means of finding out "where our sophisticated occidental civilization went wrong", then Chan K'in can often be felt directly to provide some answers, for instance, in his wry account of Akyantho, who treacherously endowed foreigners with hard metal, herd animals and money.

Chan K'in's stories, which Bruce calls his "Book", serve authoritatively to place the Lacandon in the space and time of the New World. Echoing the *Popol Vuh* of the Quiché and the *Chilam Balam Books* of the Yucatec, these literary traditions establish for the Lacandon their membership of the Maya peoples who inhabit that central wedge of Middle America now politically divided between Guatemala, Mexico (Chiapas, Yucatán), Belize and Honduras, and who historically find a common point of reference in the culture of the Classic period (c 300 to 900 AD), itself the product of millennia of previous Maya and Olmec experience. Indeed, one of the reasons why the Lacandon have exerted so strong a fascination on scholars since the days of Alfred Tozzer's *Granmar* (1921) is precisely the suspicion that in their dress and habit they preserve especially direct links with the Classic Maya past.

As might be expected, what are often popularly presented as the "lost cities" of the Classic past, now mysteriously abandoned to an unpeopled jungle and so on, seem not in the least lost to the local Maya populace. In any responsible view, there need no longer be serious doubt about the continuity, in this sense, of Maya culture up until today, not just from the Classic period but from the third millennium BC, dates now being confirmed archaeologically by Norman Hammond and others. In the case of the Lacandon the link with the past is intimate in the very etymology of their name, which in Maya means "they who set up stone idols or stelae" (*ah can tunob*).

To acknowledge this, however, is not to go as far as Bruce and Perera do, with the claim announced in their title but by no means proven in their text, viz. that as "lords" the Lacandon today are survivors specifically of the erstwhile ruling class at neighbouring Palenque. Whether true or not, this narrower identity must surely (in fact does) seem less significant over the role played by Chan K'in and others as conscientious guardians of a whole culture.

In presenting the Lacandon as the last of their line, Bruce and Perera are of course drawing attention to their immediate peril, one which is faced today by many members of the Maya family who find themselves on the outer edge of the Western money economy, usury and greed. (Uranium is now said to be next, after the oil). An especially horrific case, referred to by Perera, is that of the Quiché and other highland groups in Guatemala, who are being systematically slaughtered, village by village, man, woman and child, in what are known as anti-guerrilla, "sweepings", and in their nightmare they are not even named. Maya, "peasant" being the preferred term, the same is true of the largely unpublicized massacres of Maya communities in southern Belize, from the Guatemalan border. For the Lacandon this may seem like the *zu'ud* or end of the world inscribed in the calendar and cosmogony of Mesoamerica for the near future; at the same time, as Bruce and Perera insist, it cannot be a symptom of our own self-destruction.

After opening with the mandatory catalogue of atrocities in the first chapter she soon probes deeper and becomes more subtle. Her main achievement is to dissect the language used by American officials to mask the means of their work that to encode the needs done there. At the political level she can be read as exposing administration lies (or self-deception), but perhaps her more fundamental objection is to the style, rather than the substance, of the American presence. Haig speak must have offended her literary sensibilities – although the former Secretary of State never attained such flights of oratory as Representative Jack Kemp, who recently described El Salvador as "this flame of democracy that must not be extinguished by the cutting them off at the knees". A large American audience would welcome a persuasive and authoritative critique of this rhetoric, and Joan Didion provides just that.

The last chapter is much the most original and perceptive, as she explains the "dreamwork" that has enmeshed Haig speaking, the exclusive concern with the appearance of things since the reality is beyond repair. Her account of a lunch with the US ambassador contains a paragraph that encapsulates the pessimism and subjectivism that are central to her writing.

The sheep dog and the crystal and the American eagle together had on me a certain anaesthetic effect, temporarily deadening that receptivity to the sinister that affects everyone in El Salvador, and I experienced for a moment the official American delusion, the illusion of plausibility, the sense that

the American undertaking in El Salvador might turn out to be from the right angle, in the right light, just another difficult but possible mission in another troubled but possible country.

That nicely captures one aspect of the American mood, but such guilt and self-doubt are now luxuries beyond the means of most Salvadoreans. With nowhere else to go, with no private bolt-holes left, with only the starkest choices available, the people of El Salvador inhabit a different universe from Ms Didion's characters. Those who do not choose suicide are forced to make the most hard-headed cal-

culations of probability and the most extreme choices of value. The majority will have to survive on a diet of frugal realism, using language that has been shorn of its exquisite subtleties, until one side wins and imposes on the rest its definition of the possible and of the sinister.

Joan Didion's disenchantment with American rhetoric is withering. But would the same disenchantment, and the same literary sensibilities, make any impact either on the rhetoric of a victorious left or of a resurgent right? To reach either of those Salvadors she would have to travel much further up-river.

An end to empire

J. Lynch

TIMOTHY E. ANNA

Spain and the Loss of America
343pp. University of Nebraska Press.
£21.20.
0 8032 1014 0

The fall of the Spanish empire in America followed the fall of the Bourbons in Spain. Crisis came in 1808, the culmination of two decades of depression and war. The modest progress of Bourbon reform in Spain was cut short by the impact of the French Revolution, which drove frightened ministers into reaction and a bewildered king into the arms of the court favourite, Manuel Godoy. The Spanish people suffered severe adversity. The great grain crisis of 1803 was a time of famine, hunger and mortality, proof of how little the Bourbons had done to improve agriculture, trade and communications. Meanwhile, in spite of its efforts to maintain national independence, the government had never the vision nor the resources to resolve the pressing problem of foreign policy. The French alliance did not save Spain; it merely emphasized her weakness, prolonged her wars, and exposed her colonial commerce to British attack. Spanish American visitors to the peninsula in these years were horrified by what they saw, a once powerful metropolis enfeebled to the point of collapse and grateful enough to be a satellite of France. When, in 1807-8, Napoleon decided to reduce Spain to a puppet state and invaded the peninsula, Bourbon government was swept aside and it was from the Spanish people that resistance came. But Spaniards also began to fight among themselves over forms of government, and the next decade saw not only a struggle for independence but an even longer conflict between absolutists and liberals.

These events created in America a crisis of political legitimacy and power. Authority came traditionally from the king; laws were obeyed because they were the king's laws. Now there was no king to obey. This also brought into question the structure of power and its distribution between imperial officials and the local ruling class. The creoles had to decide upon the best way to preserve their heritage and to maintain their control. Spanish America could not remain a colony without a monarch. This is the point at which Timothy Anna takes up the story and so begins an expert account of the imperial policy-making process in all its aspects – communications with America, the influence of pressure groups on both sides of the Atlantic, the real makers of policy, the role of the king and of the institutions of state. Here is the record of Spain's policy towards its rebellious colonies, set down with authority by a historian who has already worked on the American side of the war.

The book begins with a statement of its underlying theme: that independence was not inevitable but the outcome of an explainable series of events. "It may be that the most important fact about the fall of the Spanish empire is that it did not occur when it logically should have, for this fact makes it very clear that American independence was not inevitable."

This is a remarkably unclear statement, and not perhaps a meaningful one. The historian can tell us what happened; as to its inevitability, what can he say? The author points out that during the Spanish liberal regime of 1808-14, when the king was absent, the Spanish colonies did not achieve their independence and local imperial government managed to stem the tide. It was during the restoration (1814-20) that Spain lost its grip and the independence movement took root and prevailed. This is true, though it may simply mean that it takes some time for a revolution to establish its objectives, widen its appeal, and harness its resources. Americans responded to Spanish policy and also reacted to the harsh counter-revolution, where it prevailed.

Equally, they responded to independently of Spanish policy-makers. In an early chapter the author examines imperial government and American responses in the eighteenth century. These may be regarded as the underlying structures explaining independence. Anna is mainly concerned, however, with the national and international situation of Spain as it developed from 1808 to 1826. He argues that over and above Spain's institutional, economic and military weakness, there was a basic failure of policy towards the imperial crisis, an inability to develop a coherent and consistent government, a reluctance to opt for either a military or a conciliatory solution. This failure afflicted liberals and conservatives alike, and it was a failure at the centre of imperial power. Anna presents a good case, though it would have been strengthened had he made more of the economic pressures on the government, and in particular expanded his remarks on the liberal merchants of Cadiz, who supported the Cortes and resisted any attempt to end their colonial monopoly.

Does he take the argument too far? No doubt many historians who have written of independence in terms of colonial grievances, liberation, and incipient nationalism have neglected the role of imperial government as an instrument of change or causation and as a focus of loyalty. Others, however, have observed the idea in the minds of many Spanish Americans that even a good metropolitan can become redundant. Andrés Bello, in acknowledging the "new order of prosperity" brought by the Spanish Caracas Company in the eighteenth century, also added, "If such institutions may be regarded as useful in societies in passing from infancy no longer need the leading strings with which they made their first steps towards greatness." Of course Spanish government and the Spanish presence loomed large in America for many years after 1808, and Professor Anna does us a service in reminding us of this and in restoring the balance of historical judgment of independence. But he also seems to be saying that the ultimate explanation of the process of independence must be sought at the highest levels of power in Spain – the king, the Cortes, the councils – because that was where policy was made, and changed and frustrated. In the bicentenary year of the birth of Simón Bolívar it is an interesting, if solitary, viewpoint.

Sale of MSS from the Bute collection

Sarah Bradford

The English monastic provenance of several of the most important manuscripts from the collection of the Marquess of Bute is a reminder that, just as the stones of the abbey became building material for private houses, so the great monastic libraries were dispersed to end up piecemeal in private hands. Even now, as Sotheby's sale of June 13 demonstrated, manuscripts can appear for sale which have passed from private buyer to private buyer ever since the dissolution of the monasteries and have not yet been acquired by the great public collections, the modern equivalent of the monastic library.

The third Marquess of Bute was probably responsible for the acquisition of a manuscript of the Northern Homilies in Middle English verse, one of only two known survivors from the library of Denny Abbey, the Franciscan nunnery of SS James and Leonard in Cambridgeshire, founded in 1342 and suppressed in 1539. The Denny Abbey manuscript was written in the area in the second quarter of the fifteenth century and, with sixteen other known manuscripts, forms part of the Northern Homily Cycle in its earliest unexpanded form as a collection of sermons in Middle English verse for Sundays and Feast Days. The sermons usually comprised a paraphrase of the Gospel of the day and an exposition of the text with illustrative tales, in this case, stories of Bede, St Eustace, St Oswald and, curiously, the Emperor Trajan. Interestingly this particular manuscript was either sold by or stolen from the

Abbey before its dissolution, for the first secular inscription dates from the fifteenth century when Thomas Calbot, a merchant of Lynne, appears to have used it as security for a loan which, one speculates, he was unable to repay since by the sixteenth century there are various scribbles and drawings in other hands including "Nicholas Pygge" and "William Pygge is a lowte", while the place name "Storforde" appears several times. By the late seventeenth century the manuscript had been moved from East Anglia to the West Country where it remained for approximately one hundred years until it was known to be in the library of the Bute family in Weston Square, London. It was acquired by Quaritch for £26,400.

One of the most important, if not the most valuable, of the monastic manuscripts in the sale is a collection of works by Matthew Paris. *Lives of the Abbots of St Albans* and other historical texts, executed in the early fourteenth century, one of eleven surviving from the study of the Abbot of St Albans. Marked at the end of the table of contents "De studio domini Abbatis", it was indeed the abbot's own copy of the lives of St Alban and of the founders of the Abbey, Offa, king of Mercia, and his predecessor, Offa of Ancel. It is one of only two surviving manuscripts of this text and includes also the *Gesta Abbatum* written by Matthew Paris, one of the finest thirteenth-century historical texts and a major source for the history of one of the greatest English royal abbots. It is also of bibliographical interest since it includes the earliest surviving records of the Abbey. It was sold to H. P. Kraus for £55,000.

Another great monastic library was

represented in the sale by a late fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Regium Officium* from Syon Abbey, founded by Henry V at Twickenham and transferred in 1431 to the site of the present Syon House at Isleworth. Syon was the only Bridgettine Abbey in England and its liturgy was both unusual and exceptionally interesting, partly because it was a house of both men and women, the offices being sung alternately by the different sexes. Elaborate precautions were taken so that the nuns and monks could hear but not see each other in the chapel and the nuns, as this manuscript makes clear, were regarded as educationally inferior to the monks. The authority on the subject, A. J. Collins, commenting on the section of rubric in Middle English in the liturgy, wrote that the Rule directing the priest-brothers indicated that few of the nuns would be expected to have a mastery of Latin, and pointed out that Wynkyn de Worde's *Marriage* of 1526 "as it is redde in Syon" was intended for those accustomed to using the Latin text "not understandinge what they rede" (*The Bridgettine Breviary of Syon Abbey*, Worcester, 1969). The manuscript was acquired by Alan Thomas for £3,960.

The Luton Guild Book, another survivor of the Dissolution, is a Social Register of late fifteenth-century and early sixteenth-century England, being the official copy of the membership list of the Confraternity or Guild of the Holy Trinity at Luton, Bedfordshire, founded in 1475 by Edward IV and the great Churchman Thomas Rotherham, Chancellor of England and Archbishop of York, to its dissolution in 1547. The Confraternity was socially exclusive; among its members, drawn from different parts

of England, were the Rotherham family, the Boleyns, Henry VII and Henry VIII.

The Guild Book is a remarkable source for English illumination of the period since over twenty artists worked on it over the years from its foundation to its dissolution and a number of the illuminated pages are signed with their names. The magnificent full-page frontispiece commissioned by Edward IV was executed either in Bruges or by a first-rate Bruges artist brought to London for the purpose, and is a major durable record of the introduction of the Flemish style into England. It features fine contemporary portraits of Edward and his queen, Elizabeth Woodville, with other founders of the Guild. It was apparently unsold on this occasion at £80,000.

Edward IV may well have been influenced in his choice of an artist for the Luton frontispiece by his friendship with Louis de Gruythus, the great bibliophile and art patron in the house at Bruges he passed the months of his exile from England in 1470-1471. One of the lots in the sale was in fact dedicated to de Gruythus, and for calligraphic beauty and association interest it would be hard to surpass this manuscript of *La Penitence Adam* written by or in the workshop of that brilliant and mysterious figure, Colard Mansion of Bruges, the rarest and perhaps the finest of all the early printers except Pfister. Mansion translated *La Penitence Adam* at the request of Gruythus with whom he was evidently on terms of friendship since he calls him "mon tres honore compere".

Mansion, whom experts have concluded was a close associate of Caxton (Caxton probably taught Mansion to print while Mansion probably designed Caxton's type) was, like Caxton, a many-faceted man - scribe, author, translator, printer and bookseller, running his own publishing house to sell vernacular printed books and manuscripts to aristocratic patrons. The first record of his activity was in 1450 when he was paid 54 livres by Philip the Good's keeper of jewels for a manuscript of the *Romuleon* for the palace library at Bruges; in 1454 he was a founder member of the Guild of St John the Evangelist, the Bruges confraternity of booksellers and scribes, becoming Dean of the Guild in 1472-73. He was evidently an artist whose taste for beauty eventually outran his commercial sense; in 1476 he printed Boccaccio's *De Casibus* including some copies with magnificent engravings and over the next years produced twenty-four editions, mainly in French.

Among the Bute collection was some English manuscript of considerable literary interest including John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, one of the most important Middle-English poetic texts, written at the command of Richard II, of which only two remaining in private hands. Gower's literary reputation was only matched by that of Chaucer and indeed the two poets were well acquainted. Gower, who may have been a lawyer, being given power of attorney by Chaucer when he went to Italy in 1374, while the first recension of the *Confessio Amantis* contained a passage in praise of Chaucer. The manuscript was acquired for £33,000 by H. P. Kraus. A hitherto unknown and unrecorded manuscript of Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, with other scientific texts in Middle English, was sold to the same buyer for £29,500. The work was written for Chaucer's son Lewis in 1391 and is thought to have been found in sections at the post death.

While de Gruythus distinguished himself as a soldier and a diplomat, the service first of Burgundy and then of France, his career was to a certain extent paralleled by that of the other founder of the Guild, the Duke of Stuart. The descendant of one of the Stuart family who arrived in France in 1419 to fight for Charles VI for the peace treaty of 1444 and commanded the French contingent fighting for Henry Tudor at the Battle of Bosworth in the following year, he was ambassador from Charles VIII to Ludovico Sforza of Milan in 1491 and as captain of the Scottish Archers, the royal bodyguard played a prominent part in the Italian campaigns of Charles VIII and Louis XII, spearheading Louis's attack on Naples in 1500 during which he was both Alexander VI and Cesare Borgia. Shortly before his death on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St Nicholas, Scotland in 1508 he had the foreboding dictate this treatise, a sacred handbook of practical advice on war and diplomacy. The Bute manuscript of the work, executed in France in 1516, possibly for the author's son-in-law, was sold for £35,200, again to Kraus.

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Author, Author

- Competition No 128**
Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than July 15. A prize of £10 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct - in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration.
- Entries, marked "Author, Author 128" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, 51 John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on July 22.
- "Indeed I don't think it matters" she added, "boy one looks behind."
"I should say it mattered more," said Gertrude. "Then you don't know who may be observing you. You are not on your guard. You can't try to look pretty."
 - The tea-rose tea-town, etc.
Supplants the moustalline of Cos.
The pianola "replicates"
Sappho's barbitos.
 - One cry, and I stumble from bed,
Cry-heavy and floral
In my Victorian nightgown.
Your mouth opens clean as a cat's.
The window square
Whirls and swallows its dull stars.
And now you try
- Your handful of notes:
The clear vowels rise like balloons.
Competition No 124
Winner: X. J. Kennedy
Answers:
1 I drive through the streets, and I am not a d-
not a d-
who I am.
The people they stare, and they are who I am.
And if I should chance to run over a-
I can pay for the damage if ever I had.
So pleasant it is to have a-
So pleasant it is to have a-
A. H. Clough, *Dipsychos*, Scene 4.
- When she gave a dance she engaged
three bands.
And she entered the Ritz once walking
on her hands;
She drove round London in a crimson
Roll.
"The soul of every party" - as if parties
had souls!
Oh, *Monal* the party's over now!
William Plomer, "Monal Flat Monal"
A Memory of the Twenties.
- I say, "Le Roy, just how much are we
owing?"
Something I can't comprehend,
the more we get the more we
He only answers, "Let's get going."
Le Roy, you're earning too much
money now.
Elizabeth Bishop, "Songs for a Colored Singer".

to the editor

E. H. Carr as Historian

Sir, - *De mortuis nihil nisi malum?* After Norman Stone's vicious attack on Carr and all his works in the *London Review of Books* we now have Labeledz's hatchet job, purporting to be a review of Carr's last book (on the Comintern) (June 10). Dragged in at vast length is every mistake and misjudgment Carr ever committed, from the appeasement period to the false "Lytvinnov diaries", and this in a style highly reminiscent of the condemnatory prose of high Stalinism. In so far as this was a review at all, it was of his fourteen-volume history of the USSR. I have myself repeatedly criticized a number of Carr's conceptions, in the *TLS* and elsewhere, but I really do find this exercise of posthumous denigration offensive. Space forbids me giving more than a very few instances as to why.

Carr had said all along that he would stop when he reached 1929 and gave reasons, ranging from problems of documentation to advancing age. Labeledz will have none of this. He knows the real reason: Carr did not want "to confront the reality of Stalinist Russia". Did he not make some rather harsh judgments on Stalinism? Yes, Labeledz even quotes some, but with a sneer: this was only after "he followed trendy lefties. Proof? He did not make critical remarks about the 'Stalin period' in his eighth volume. Carr, were he alive, would have doubtless retorted that critical remarks about the Stalin period best belong when the history gets nearer to the Stalin period. That Carr had been insufficiently critical, especially of Lenin in his unsatisfactory first volume is, for me at least, beyond dispute - though perhaps a "review" of a book on the Comintern in the 1930s is an odd place to say so.

Then there is the "guilt by association" technique, again Stalinist in spirit and method: Carr thanked Rothstein and Deutscher (among dozens of others) for references, he had praised Deutscher's biography of Trotsky, Deutscher's widow did some research for him, and said that Carr and Deutscher were friends. All this is a serious review? My own relations with Labeledz have been friendly for twenty-five years and more, and I hope will remain so. If I were to praise Labeledz's editorship of *Survey*, would that mean that I shared his opinions? It is simply preposterous to assert that Labeledz himself says that he rejected the economic interpretation of history. "Progress" he did not believe in, but that is something else. Far from accepting Deutscher's view of Trotsky, he did not take his (or Bukharin's) policy alternatives seriously, and I even criticized him for it in a review in the *TLS*.

Deutscher, we know, is a particular *bête noire* of Labeledz, so he is dragged in at great length in this "review". Much is made of Deutscher's omission or concealment of a statement by Trotsky, which Labeledz apparently found in the Trotsky archives, about the "Thermidor" analogy. He seems unaware of the fact that Trotsky made a very large number of contradictory statements about "Thermidor". Karl Paz lists many of them on pages 394-400 of his excellent critical biography - and that the passage he cites was published in 1928, in the very first issue of *Byulleten*, *oppositist*. It was thus available to anyone without access to archives. I, for one, read it in the library of the University of Glasgow. Why it should radically alter my or anyone else's view of Trotsky or of Soviet history I do not know. Opinions may differ as to why Deutscher (and Knel-Paz) chose not to quote this particular passage. But what has all this to do with Carr?

The statement that Carr's history is "not quoted or referred to in official Soviet publications" is quite wrong. I have seen many references and quotations. But so what? Had Labeledz known this, he might well have included it on his list of Carr's sins.

E. H. Carr as Historian

Sir, - I believe that Carr was mistaken in a number of important respects, but may I appeal for moderation in vituperation, especially when those under attack cannot answer back.

ALEC NOVE,
55 Hamilton Drive, Glasgow.

'A Personal History'

Sir, - If in writing that the historian should aim to be as popular as the novelist A. J. P. Taylor has said "something silly", as Robert Skidelsky claims in his review (May 27) of Taylor's *A Personal History*, then he has distinguished himself. Every schoolboy knows that Macaulay wrote in 1841 that "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last of the young ladies." Even as a practical aim this statement was not silly, for, as his biographer added in 1876, "It may be said, for the credit of his countrymen no less than for his own, that the annual sale of his History has frequently since 1857 surpassed the sale of any other fashionable novel of the current year." It is less well known that Macaulay was the most popular species of writing, since it can adapt itself to the highest or the lowest capacity. My book [*Decline and Fall*] was on every table, and almost on every toilette.

It may be doubted that a modern historian could achieve the dominant popular success of a Gibbon or Macaulay (though I see no reason why a work of history might not sell enormous numbers of copies). But at the same time Taylor is correct in suggesting that to aim for popular success may be proper and salutary for a historian, since it encourages him to regard history as a branch of literature.

Johnson's Dictionary

Sir, - Because it is generally laudable, Donald Greene's correction (Letters, May 27) of the "hoary legend" that the purpose of Johnson's *Dictionary* was "to stabilize rather than to define" should itself be corrected. Although he is right to assert that Johnson was primarily concerned to record rather than to fix English, Greene should recognize the very considerable extent to which the *Dictionary* also does the latter. First, the English Johnson records is mainly the language written by selected men of literary eminence who lived from about 1554 to 1745. Second, Johnson prints his records along with extensive, sometimes "authoritative", ungrammatical and barbarous. As the ignorant users whom Johnson cites as Hooker, Bacon, Sandys, and Herbert, it ought to be clear that Johnson was willing to attempt stabilization in the face of usage, even long and authoritative usage. See also "dissever" (unrip) and "intermural" (between), the eighth sense of "hence" (precocious), and the eighth sense of "would". The last is "improper" as argued by Shakespeare.

Mr Freeman now declares that when he referred to "Malone's personal transcript" of Henslowe's diary he "did not mean to say that it was in Malone's hand; by 'personal' he meant his property". In this clarification, Freeman gives up his case. If Malone had no hand in making the transcript, his possession is irrelevant to determining its date - the only reason for bringing it in as evidence against Collier. The transcript could have been made as early as the mid-eighteenth century and the insertions in the original manuscript could have been put there after the transcript was made - and before Collier was born. The point is (again) not whether the insertions are forgeries but whether Collier made them.

Mr Freeman implies that the "forged modern insertions" in the Henslowe diary manuscript were all made by one person and that their absence from "Malone's private Collier". It should follow, then, that if any of the "forgeries" in "Malone's personal transcript", Collier cannot be assumed to have forged any of them. And at least two of them are. Freeman is apparently unaware that "Mr Maest" one, one of the "forged insertions" (on f. 64v in the manuscript) appears - without interlineation - in "Malone's personal transcript". In addition, "Porter" (f. 46) is noted in the transcript. This is evidence that the original manuscript before Collier saw it and if, as Freeman argues, all of the insertions

Language Acquisition

Sir, - Because T. P. Waldron minimized the problem of how children acquire a native language, and accused researchers of exaggerating its difficulty so as to remain employed, I challenged him to devise a computer program that would learn any natural language. He was brave enough to say that he might accept the challenge, but now seems to have changed his mind (Letters, June 17). A. W. Still (Letters, June 10) agrees that Waldron may have underestimated the difficulty of understanding language acquisition, but disagrees that a computer program is a good test of a putative theory of the process. He writes: "The difficulty in devising a program is because children are not like computer programs in any interesting way, and they start out with advantages, which include being sociable animals, that are overwhelming but inevitably ignored in the abstractions implicit in the computer analogy." I am sympathetic to much in this argument, but take exception to one word in it - the word "inevitably". That word makes me suspect that Dr. Still has some dangerously close to convincing a theory with what the theory is about. It is almost as though he were to argue against current meteorological practice (or to explain the inaccuracies in forecasts) on the grounds that weather conditions are not like computer programs in any interesting way: the weather produces all sorts of physical phenomena - rain, snow, gales, fog - but a computer program cannot produce any of them. Of course Dr. Still is right in thinking that children start out learning language with all sorts of advantages. A theory of language acquisition should explain how these advantages help. Modelling the theory in a computer program remains an excellent test of its rigour, consistency, and completeness. It may still be a poor theory by scientific standards, and that is why my challenge to Waldron also required him to show that his program learns in the same way as children.

P. N. JOHNSON-LAIRD,
MRC Applied Psychology Unit, 15 Chaucer Road, Cambridge.

Mr Freeman declares: "Either Collier was or he wasn't a forger. Gannell says he must 'leave to others the proof or disproof of this...'. Moreover, most entries in the *Dictionary* appear without comment, and Greene's contention is generally right. To offer further support of it without neglecting consideration of the many exceptions to be taken into account, it is appropriate to quote part of Johnson's entry under "letter". Finding it necessary to explain yet another lapse of analogy in English, Johnson comments, "This is the comparative of late, though universally written with it, contrary to analogy, and to our own practice in the superlative latest." When he is finished with his commentary, however, Johnson restates the main principle of his lexicography in the words of Horace:

Quem pones arbitrium, est, et vis [sic] et norma loquendi!
ROBERT DEMARIA, Jr.,
Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, New York 12601.

John Payne Collier

Sir, - It would be unnecessary to reply to Arthur Freeman (Letters, June 3) were it not that his letter contains yet more comments of the kind that marked his review (April 22) of my book *Fortune and Men's Eyes*. In seeking to shore up his position, he has made it worse.

Mr Freeman now declares that when he referred to "Malone's personal transcript" of Henslowe's diary he "did not mean to say that it was in Malone's hand; by 'personal' he meant his property". In this clarification, Freeman gives up his case. If Malone had no hand in making the transcript, his possession is irrelevant to determining its date - the only reason for bringing it in as evidence against Collier. The transcript could have been made as early as the mid-eighteenth century and the insertions in the original manuscript could have been put there after the transcript was made - and before Collier was born. The point is (again) not whether the insertions are forgeries but whether Collier made them.

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DEWEY GANZEL,
Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio 44074.

'Novel on Blue Paper'

Sir, - John Batchelor says in his review of the *Dickens Studies Annual* (June 3) that it contains the first publication of William Morris's *Novel on Blue Paper*. What it actually contains is the first publication of a transcript of the manuscript in the British Library. A reading version, also edited by Penelope Fitzgerald, was previously published by the *Journeymen Press* in its cheap but elegant, Chapbook series last year.

NICOLAS WALTER,
88 Ilington High Street, London N1.

Among this week's contributors

- ROSEMARY ASHTON's book on George Eliot in Oxford University Press's Past Masters series will be published in October.
- HUGH D. R. BAKER is Reader in Chinese at the University of London. His books include *New Peace Country: A Chinese Gazetteer of the Hong Kong Region*, 1983.
- GILES BARBER is the Librarian of the Taylor Institution, Oxford.
- NICOLAS BARKER is Head of Conservation at the British Library.
- C. R. BAWDEN is Professor of Mongolian at the University of London. His most recent book is *Eight North Mongolian Epic Poems*, 1982.
- PHILIP BROCKBANK is Director of the Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham.
- GORDON BROTHSTON's books include *The Emergence of the Latin American Novel*, 1978.
- STEPHEN R. L. CLARK's *The Nature of the Beast* was published last year.
- IN THE WAY OF UNDERSTANDING**
Priscilla Norman
"a rare personal authority"
- *Sunday Telegraph*
"a true amateur, committed, knowledgeable, independent"
- *Times Literary Supplement*
"a delightful book"
- *The Economist*
"No reviewer could do justice to the book or express adequately his admiration of the author's"
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- A. J. CLOSS is a lecturer in Spanish at the University of Cambridge.
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- MICHAEL DAVIS was the editor of the *Melbourne Age* from 1979 to 1981.
- DELLA DAVIN is the author of *Woman-power: Women and the party in revolutionary China*, 1976.
- FILIPPO DOMINI was formerly Director of the Italian Institute in London.
- JOHN K. FAIRBANK's books include *China Perceived: Images and policies in Chinese-American relations*, in 1976.
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- RICHARD HARRIS writes on Asian affairs for *The Times*.
- DAVID HAWKES is a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford. The third volume of his translation of *The Story of the Stone* by Cao Xueqin was published in 1981.
- W. J. F. JENNINGS's recent books include *Memories of Laysan*, 1981.
- J. LYNETT is Professor of Latin American History at the University of London.
- JOSEPH NISPRAND's books include *Science and Civilisation in China, Volume V: Chemistry and Chemical Technology, part 4: Spacetime, Discovery and Invention: Apparatus, Theories and Gifts and, together with Li Gwei-Djan, Celestial Lancets: History and rationale of acupuncture and moxa*, both 1980.
- D. E. POLLARD is Professor of Chinese at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London.
- JESSICA RAWSON is a Curator in the Department of Oriental Antiquities at the British Museum.
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- DON RIMINGTON is Senior Lecturer in Chinese Studies at the University of Leeds.
- ALAN RUDRUM's Clarendon edition of Thomas Vaughan's *Works* will be published next year.
- A. W. B. SIMPSON is Professor of Law at the University of Kent.
- C. H. SISSON's translation of *The Divine Comedy* was published in 1980.
- FRANCES SPALDING is author of *Roger Fry: Art and Life*, 1981.
- JONATHAN SPENCE's most recent book is *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and their Revolution 1895-1980*, 1982.
- JOHN STOKES is the author of *Oscar Wilde*, 1978.
- MICHAEL SULLIVAN is a Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford.
- P. H. SUTCLIFFE is the author of *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History*, 1978.
- LAUREN TAYLOR is Professor of Sociology at the University of York.
- J. L. WATSON is the author of *Emigration and the Chinese Lineage*, 1975.
- WILLIAM WATSON is Professor of Chinese Art and Archaeology at the University of London.
- DICK WILSON's biography of Zhou Enlai will be published shortly.
- YANG ZIANYI is General Editor of *Chinese Literature*.
- ZHU HONG is an Associate Research Fellow of the Institute of Foreign Literature of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Peking.

education bequeathed at least by the older professionals, a second more topical orthodoxy is imposed by a political oligarchy operating at the summit of the administrative pyramid, into which cultural property offices, provincial field-research teams and museum staffs are fitted. The rumpus which arose over the excavated "treasures" sent abroad in 1972 showed archaeologists stepping marginally outside their political brief. But an issue of the Cultural Revolution was involved in that, and the foreign experts who were then declared enemies of the Chinese people had the comfort of joining Confucius himself in exile.

Today ideas range more widely, territorially as befits the expanded empire, and historically, so that recent efforts further to assimilate the archaeological record to the historical one, by recognizing the pre-Shang dynasty of Xia among excavated things, appear more curious than misleading. Many scholars, Chinese, Japanese and occidental, have doubted the historical existence of Xia, or considered it to be distinct only geographically from Shang and not its antecedent, believing the enhanced rôle of Xia to be the work of Confucian historiographers and euhemerists. But the political mandarins seem to adhere to the old idea: Xia figured in the tables of the 1972 exhibition although no artefacts were attributed to it, and a current argument goes that neolithic culture which includes signs of bronze-working and immediately antedates Shang must be of the "Xia period". Thus An Jinhai, speaking in 1982 at the fourth annual conference of the new Chinese Archaeological Society. In the previous year An Zhimin, doyen of the profession, explained simply that the said neolithic culture, overlapping in time with the early Shang, might contain traces of bronze, but he showed no inclination to resurrect the notion of a historical Xia with all that that connotes in traditional ideology.

The great success of Chinese archaeologists is to have stayed in business: when other humane studies perished (in particular, classical literature and the history of art) their field-work and comparatively full

publication continued unabated, even through the Cultural Revolution. They have reanimated disciplines which were barely established in China, and wholly created others, so that the *Journal of Field Archaeology* (*Kaogu xuebao*) is indispensable to students of intellectual history. For example, in recent issues, Wang Ningxiong of the Institute of National Minorities in Kunming writes on the genesis of Chinese writing, starting from the evidence of pictographic texts, un-Chinese in form and principles, which survived until the nineteenth century in village tradition. The earliest appearance of such writing is on bronze tablets consigned to the tombs of the Dian nobles who ruled Yunnan in the early Han period; An Zhimin and many others address themselves with great enthusiasm to the problems of the earliest bronze casting, for in this there is competition with other Asian cultures, discussing the putative pre-Shang finds made in Xinjiang and in south Henan; Ma Chengyuan joins a small group investigating musical scales through the responses of bronze bells dated at intervals from the twelfth century BC; the history of architecture flourishes in the hands of Yang Hongxun, who exercises skills now well established for interpreting trabecate systems from the disposition of supports traced in the ground-plan as pillar-footings of various calibres. We can now follow, from the thirteenth to twelfth century onwards, the evolution of the wooden architecture which eventually passed to Korea, Japan and Vietnam. The buildings are revealed archaeologically as consisting at the start of pillared galleries écheloned up the sides of a pyramidal terrace.

Numismatics is another subject which archaeological discovery has set upon a scientific basis for the earlier periods. Anthropometric studies of neolithic populations, as instanced in current field reports, promise to throw light on the racial mix which will prove to constitute, or to isolate from the mass, those men of Han whose culture had spread uniformly over the country by Han times. The ritual bronze vessels of the Shang nobility have been found as far south as the

Yangtze and to the east in Shantung. Whether this dispersal signifies actual government and taxation, or only an exchange of gifts with independent local rulers, is for archaeologists to decide. Their conclusion will be as important as the view of the Shang state which has been distilled from the oracle sentences, for which the historian is no less beholden to the excavator.

In ceramic study, the scientific light thrown by recent work in Shanghai is noticed elsewhere in this issue by Jessica Rawson (page 678), but plain excavation and survey of kiln sites, the work of a small army of field archaeologists, also has its revolutionary tale to tell. Surprisingly to those bent on identifying ideal pot types uniquely with specific kilns, it is some time in their history made most kinds of pottery, except for the porcelains, responding to market demand and facilities of transport and the dispersal of their product, much can be learned of internal and external trade. For example, the discovery of fragments of Chinese pottery of the late ninth century at Laem Pho, site of the ancient port on the east side of the Thai peninsula, marks an entrepôt where cargoes were landed to be carried overland to a port of exit on the West side, and so onwards to markets in Persia and Egypt. The glass weights of Muslim merchants and pieces of the purple-glazed jars from ships hailing from the Persian Gulf attest the Western side of the trade, while the variety of the Chinese ceramic implies use of the Grand Canal from the north central Hunan to Canton - itself a pottery centre - and probably coastal shipping from Fujian kilns to the same international port.

Wang Zhongshu is a deputy director of the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and his *Han Civilization* is the fullest one-volume account of the period, superior to anything produced in the Republic itself. The themes are town-planning, agriculture and industry; walls, carriage-tracks, drains, the trace of factories and ritual buildings, all are beautifully illustrated and recovered with unswerving objectivity. Chapters on city history and agriculture draw in the historical record, all familiar in specialist literature but here confronted with artefacts and excavation data. Although Dr Wang's editors have added a bibliography of Western literature, the author himself refers only to Chinese publications, and his account observes the usual reticences. The rôle of the state in devising and limiting industry is not discussed, nor the political import of the rise of "manor economy" in the late Han. A most revealing account of iron technology connects it with the rapid Han expansion of ship-building on the one hand and the multiplication of domestic items on the other. Here reference to the pre-Han "solid state carburisation method" and the Han carbon infiltration method and processes of surface carbonization, reflects archaeological expertise in which the Chinese now lead. State enterprise in lacquer workshops, a theme which has been thoroughly studied in Japan, is neatly presented, with all the historical and epigraphical record, but it is still strange that there should be no mention in this connection of the official promulgation of archaizing styles of decoration. Art and aesthetics form no part of the book, although the Han period saw a revolution in these matters which set subsequent tradition on course.

Michèle Pirazzoli-t'Serstevens

English literature in translation

Yang Xianyi

English has always been the most widely taught foreign language in modern China, so it is not surprising to find that numerous works of English literature were translated into Chinese during the last century. Starting with Shakespeare, the list of translated works is quite impressive, including Milton, Swift, Defoe, Fielding and Smollett, George Eliot, the Brontës, Mrs Gaskell and Jane Austen, William Blake, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley and Keats, quite a few of Walter Scott's novels, much of Charles Dickens, Thackeray, Oscar Wilde, Hardy, Galsworthy, Bernard Shaw - it is not possible in this limited space to give a complete list. Certainly, if we were to make a comparison with English translations of Chinese literature in the West, we would find that the average Chinese reader has a far more comprehensive idea of English literature than the average English reader of Chinese literature.

However, if we look at the list more closely, we will find some interesting preferences and curious omissions. Dickens has always been a favourite in China; even today most Chinese people probably still view remote English society through Dickensian characters, and they may have the idea that the present-day English gentleman is a cross between Mr Pickwick and Mr Micawber. *Vanity Fair* has been translated several times and recently there have been translations of *Barchester Towers* and one of *The Cloister and the Hearth*. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge* are well known to the Chinese through translations, and I know of one young writer who wants to take Hardy as his model. There is a recent re-issue of Mark Twain's *The Revolution and Tanqueray's Lane*, a strange choice, made perhaps because of the word "revolution" in the title, and because it has also been translated into Russian. It is rather odd that Conrad has never appeared in Chinese translation; perhaps Chinese readers find his characters difficult to understand.

Relatively few well-known post-First and Second World War English writers have been translated. I am not aware of any Chinese translations of J. B. Priestley, Charles Morgan, Joyce Cary, Anthony Burgess, Kingsley Amis, P. G. Wodehouse, Evelyn Waugh, Angus Wilson or C. P. Snow. I think there was an early translation

of E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*, but it is certainly now out of print. Recently a few of Somerset Maugham's short stories have appeared in translation as well as one or two by D. H. Lawrence. Oddly enough, Graham Greene seems to be an exception. Both *The Quiet American* and *The Heart of the Matter* have appeared in translation, as recently has *The Good Hope Party*. *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are unavailable in China owing to the obvious unsuitability of their political message. During the "cultural revolution", one English visitor sarcastically told his young Chinese interpreter that China was fast approaching 1984, and the poor interpreter, who had never heard of this work, took this as a great compliment.

English women writers fare more or less the same as the men. George Eliot, Jane Austen and the Brontës sisters are still the favourites. Apart from Katherine Mansfield, whose short stories were enthusiastically praised by one Chinese poet in the early 1930s, practically no twentieth-century British women writers are known in China to non-English-speaking readers.

Since the late 1930s, few Chinese students have studied literature in England. The emphasis has always been on science and technology, and this probably accounts for the fact that the twentieth-century English literature is so little known in China. During the "cultural revolution", when all Western literature was prohibited, even early translations of Shakespeare and Dickens disappeared from the bookshops. After the fall of the "gang", there was renewed interest in foreign literature and in the past few years many old translations have been re-issued. Many new translations have appeared too, although the bulk of these are of crime and detection and popular spy thrillers. In this category are all of the Sherlock Holmes stories, more than twenty Agatha Christie's, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*, *The Day of the Jackal*, Ken Follet's *Rebel*. It is a little surprising that Agatha Christie is so much in favour, while none of Dorothy Sayers's Lord Peter Wimsey stories have been translated. For obvious reasons, Sax Rohmer's Dr Fu Manchu stories have never found their way into Chinese.

Another interesting absence is that of James Bond. One would think that Fleming's ability to powder his confessions with details about food, cars, guns, etc would suit the young Chinese readers' taste. Perhaps it is explicit descriptions of sexual activity which are a little embarrassing in a society with more prudish tendencies, or it may be because in his stories the Russian KGB agents are all baddies while the British secret service agents are the goodies, and this political bias seems impermissible.

Quite a number of children's books have been translated. *Adventures in Wonderland* was first translated by a famous Chinese philologist over half a century ago, and recently a new translation has appeared. In fact most of the great classics of children's fiction have been or are available. *Peter Pan*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House at Pooh Corner*, *Tommy Island*, *Hugh Lofting's Dr Doolittle*, all have Chinese versions.

There is a vogue for science fiction in China today. However, English science fiction is not widely represented. H. G. Wells is known by *The Time Machine* and *The Invisible Man*, but *The War of the Worlds* is not translated, neither are such apocalyptic works as John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids*. Chinese people do not have pessimistic ideas that the world is going to be dominated by insects, robots or creatures from outer space, or destroyed by a nuclear holocaust or other catastrophe; so they find most present-day Western science fiction too depressing and unacceptable. The early Jules Verne stories are more popular.

So many of the provincial publishing houses in China are now putting out new translations of Western literature that it is difficult to make a comprehensive and complete survey. At the moment American literature is more in fashion, and more modern American works are translated into Chinese. However, gaps in the Chinese people's knowledge of contemporary English literature may be just a temporary phenomenon. I have heard that a translation of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is soon to appear, and that John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, *The Collector* and *The Magus* are being translated.

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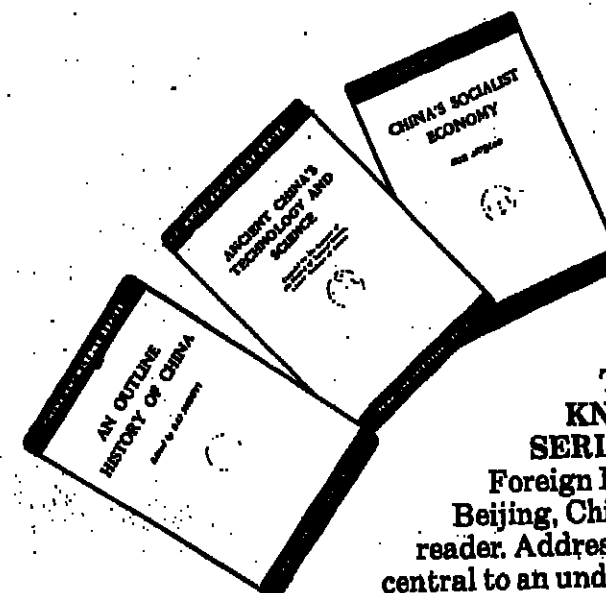
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Dynamism and dynasticism

Don Rimmington

JACQUES GERNET
A History of Chinese Civilization
Translated by J. R. Foster
722pp. Cambridge University Press.
£25.
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Early Ming China: A Political History 1355-1435
315pp. Stanford University Press.
\$30.
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"History is not made by the brute facts, but by the natural dynamism immanent in them which the historian must seek to grasp by intuition." Those familiar with the writings of Jacques Gernet will not be surprised to find this view expressed in *A History of Chinese Civilization*, which has now been made available in English translation, following favourable reception as *Le Monde chinois* in the early 1970s. The sentence seems to sum up the passion, commitment and individuality of Gernet's approach to his work, and this monumental study, which manages to present in a clear and readable way the infinite complexities of Chinese history from neolithic times to the death of Mao Zedong, is an impressive achievement. It is certainly the best overall survey of Chinese history and civilization.

In his approach to Chinese history, Gernet is moved by a number of obvious concerns: he is determined not to fall into the trap of seeing China's development as a series of political periods, identified conveniently by dynastic titles; he is also intent on challenging those value judgments on Chinese history, which suggest that China stagnated for long periods or held permanently to the same social structures or the same political ideology; and he tries to ensure that Chinese values and manners are discussed with scrupulous objectivity and to make it plain that the contacts China has had with other countries have almost invariably led to influences in both directions.

The patterns of Chinese history are technological changes, which inevitably have an economic impact, and he sees a number of major turning-points in China's past: in ancient China the early Bronze age witnessed the discovery of alloys, the use of carts with shafts and the development of writing, which were all crucial to the forming of the aristocratic Shang Dynasty; in the 4th and 3rd centuries BC iron-smelting spread among the warring states; and the developments in agriculture and trade, together with the formation of peasant armies, paved the way for the establishment of a centralized state; from 1,000 AD agricultural surpluses resulting from improvements in rice production gave the opportunity for a rapid expansion in commercial activity and in maritime trade, carried on vast ocean-going junks which were unique in the world at that stage; the discovery of cheap printing techniques in the same period prompted significant literary and cultural developments.

The brilliant era of the high Tang, and the first half of the 8th century, with its poetic and artistic achievements, is seen as a culmination of cultural and social trends which had their origins in the period of national division some two or three centuries before. The "aristocratic empire" of the Tang crumbled after the disastrous An Lushan rebellion of 755-763, and though the Dynasty continued for more than a hundred years longer, power was never retrieved by the central government from the military regions. As Gernet points out, subsequently under the Song Chinese society was to be transformed, with rich, educated families replacing the old aristocracy and providing the civil service for the now more thoroughly centralized bureaucracy, and with merchants prospering in those great commercial cities which far surpassed

in scale and complexity the European townships of the same period.

Gernet also demonstrates that the Ming Dynasty, which restored Chinese leadership after 150 years of Mongol rule, was far from being the homogeneous whole that many historians have described. The "Mandarin" empire was indeed consolidated by the Ming and afterwards survived to the beginning of this century, but there were also major shifts in society, such as the sixteenth-century expansion into business activity, following technical developments in manufacturing processes. The lower Yangtze became the base for commercial activities and the province of Hunan and Hubei further up the river became the centre of rice production.

The precise origins of that "Mandarin" empire are brought into question by Edward Dreyer's meticulous study, *Early Ming China*. The Ming restoration was credited with reasserting Chinese values and reviving the Confucian State, with its civil administration, recruited by formal examinations. Dreyer's contention is that the early Ming emperors on the contrary maintained Mongol practices and institutions, and often manifested strictly non-Confucian attitudes. In particular, their emphasis on military conquest and their appointment of military men, rather than civil administrators, to the important offices of state can be seen as clear evidence of a style of government which was far from Confucian. It was only later, after 1350, that the military successes of the régime allowed the administration to pass fully into the hands of the civil bureaucracy.

Gernet allows himself some cautious

observations on the general characteristics of Chinese civilization. China is noted for having a highly developed agriculture, but he emphasizes that it has also been a most advanced technical society, with the highest skills in metallurgy, porcelain manufacturing, and silk and cotton weaving. The Chinese state developed the most complex forms of political organization and it was accepted that the exercise of political power carried with it the idea of moral correction. Chinese thought is distinctive in a number of ways: it cannot conceive of "transcendent truths" "the idea of good in itself"; it does not distinguish between mind and matter; the notion of "complementarity" is preferred, as is the idea of "order as an organic totality".

The contrasts between Chinese and Western thought are demonstrated vividly in Gernet's *China et Christianisme*, which describes in detail the experiences of the Jesuit priests in China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the Chinese reaction to them, with numerous quotations of the views of individuals on both sides.

Despite their zeal and subtlety, the Jesuits came up against problems at all levels in China. Within the organic unity of the Chinese system, headed by an all-powerful emperor, who had the sole right to make sacrifices to Heaven, religion could not have autonomous power, and worship was viewed as a political affair. For the Jesuits to talk of the separation of politics and religion was seen as an aberration. Christians were therefore always at risk of being seen as a heterodox sect, and as a possible focus of social unrest. Their achievement of conversions among the Chinese, through stories of, or even

demonstrations of, miracles, added weight to official suspicions of magical practices, especially when some of the converts exhibited fanatical commitment.

Many Christian concepts proved difficult to explain, or even translate. If Chinese thinking did not distinguish between mind and matter, then body and soul could not be easily separated. In Chinese minds spirit and feeling, intelligence and moral sense merged. The idea of a soul endowed with reason and capable of deciding freely to act well or badly was entirely foreign to them.

The Chinese liking for philosophical and religious syncretism was deplored by the missionaries, for whom there could be only one true religion. Gernet quotes statements, however, by Chinese converts, who had no problem in seeing their faith as an amalgam of Christianity and Confucianism. These converts might be forgiven their confusion, since the Jesuits, and in particular Matteo Ricci, had from the start attempted to link Christianity with Confucianism to gain the confidence of Chinese contacts. This association of the two religions could, of course, work both ways:

De même que certains missionnaires pensaient que les lettrés chinois avaient des dispositions pour la foi, des lettrés estimèrent qu'une foi débarrassée de leurs idées fausses, comme de la croyance à un Dieu créateur, les missionnaires auraient pu faire d'assez bons confucéens.

Another concession the Jesuits made was to tolerate, or to turn a blind eye to, ancestor worship among their converts. This laxity was to end in

severe problems for their order. Rites controversy at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

As a support for their proselytizing the Jesuits brought with them books on mathematics, astronomy, cartography, as well as scientific equipment and gadgets, and it was the introduction of scientific ideas and methods which in the end was the lasting contribution to China. The converts to their faith, since they achieved only a limited understanding of their faith, since they had no goodwill between them and the Chinese, there were large areas of mutual incomprehension, arising just from differences in intellectual tradition but from totally different ways of thinking.

In those early religious contacts, the Jesuits brought with them a view of the world which was entirely new to the Chinese. The nineteenth-century missionaries found themselves with the same misunderstandings, but at the same time they were part of a new economic intrusion into China which the final analysis was based on the Chinese's disintegration at the beginning of this century can be traced back to internal crises in the sixteenth century, but the process was accelerated by foreign pressure. Gernet in the closing chapters of *A History of Chinese Civilization* sees China as "crucible" at that stage, but, with his own view of Chinese Utopianism, he gets a view of the current scene, a compassion and some optimism. His translation of his book is a little precise and wordy, and individual terms sometimes appear in a standard form (for example, "treaty" for "treaty port"), but it is masterly and stimulating survey, which should be read by anyone who wants to understand ancient or modern China.

The rituals of the table

Hugh D. R. Baker

recorded his horror at grain shortages in the southern provinces: "cold", such as fresh-water crab, guavas, are carefully avoided by the lecher and by the aspiring farmer. Ancestors are involved with food in another way. They dwell in the world considered to be much like this one, and they need the same things there as here. It is their descendants who supply them with housing, money, transport, clothing and food, all of which are offered in ceremonies on the graveside and in front of small altars on an altar. Most of those offerings are made of paper and burned to transfer them to the ancestor - but food is too important to be represented by such make-believe. Real food is offered, the "essence" is consumed by the dead, and the remainder eaten up by the living. It is significant that a worshipped ancestor becomes a "hungry ghost", not a "homeless ghost" or a "penitential ghost".

In other rituals too, food plays a major part in the offerings, and ceremony is complete without an accompanying feast. The particular foods used are never random, but have some symbolic value. Oranges, red apples, pink or crimson-coloured buns are offered because colours in the red-orange range are considered to be lucky. At New Year feasts, fish is eaten because the word for "fish" (yu) sounds like the word for "surplus" (yu) which everyone would like to achieve. Another favourite dish at that time is oysters, the name for which sounds like the words for "happy events". Lettuce is offered at fertility ceremonies because its name (in Cantonese at least) sounds like "the birth of a child". Red chopsticks are brought to newly-weds, because the Chinese "chopsticks" sounds like "quickly a son".

Much of traditional ritual has died in the Republic since 1949, but the symbolism and importance of food remains. Chinese Muslims have been able to maintain their pork-free diet; Muslims still eat the *yin-yang* balancing foods; in a society where the day of starvation are fresh in the memory of everyone over forty and where everyone goods are still in very short supply, eating is a pleasure to be cultivated and food remains a topic of enthralling interest.

Despise Guangdong's great size and ample population it still looks to Guangxi for its rice: the Guangdong people seek money and profit, and plant much of their land with such things as longan (a cousin of the lychee), sugar-cane, tobacco and indigo, with the result that they have wealth but no rice. . . . How can it be right to look for short-term profit at the expense of neglecting the vital source of life?

There is assumed here a kind of moral virtue in grain production which finds echoes in contemporary Chinese concern with agriculture. Grain is food, almost everything else merely dressing. "An iron rice-bowl" is a steady job: "to break someone's rice bowl" is to ruin his livelihood. Staple foods are of prime importance to all but it is the dressings which stand for quality of life and which are the concern of the gourmet and the cook. One important function of eating is to preserve the balance of forces (the yin and the yang and the hot and the cold elements) which keep body and soul in condition. Different foods have different values - alcohol spirits are hot, soybeans and scallions are warm, congee (rice porridge) is cool, and spinach is cold. Careful attention to a balanced diet is prophylactic, and counterbalancing may be prescribed in cases of illness resulting from too much heat or cold.

Food balance may be deliberately manipulated to specific ends: a fighter, for example, might build up his ferocity through eating the meat of "strong" animals such as tigers, and more than one warrior hero of fiction finds his strength and ferocity increased after "getting" drunk. Probably the most common form of manipulation is the aphrodisiac. The Chinese have practised ancestor worship throughout their known history, and ancestors, it goes without saying, must have descendants, so virility and fertility have been major concerns of the Chinese male. Stag's penis and bull's testicles are thought to be particularly efficacious aids to sexual prowess, but many other foods which are "hot" and "yang" may be taken; and other which are very

major part in the offerings, and ceremony is complete without an accompanying feast. The particular foods used are never random, but have some symbolic value. Oranges, red apples, pink or crimson-coloured buns are offered because colours in the red-orange range are considered to be lucky. At New Year feasts, fish is eaten because the word for "fish" (yu) sounds like the word for "surplus" (yu) which everyone would like to achieve. Another favourite dish at that time is oysters, the name for which sounds like the words for "happy events". Lettuce is offered at fertility ceremonies because its name (in Cantonese at least) sounds like "the birth of a child". Red chopsticks are brought to newly-weds, because the Chinese "chopsticks" sounds like "quickly a son".

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With this background in mind it is hardly surprising that China should have been the culture where we find the earliest evidences of preventive inoculation.

The idea itself must have arisen from the ancient folk observation that nobody ever suffered from smallpox more than once in a lifetime. In regions where it was endemic, however, everybody was due to get it once. It was one of the "gates" of life that children, or sometimes adults, had to pass through, and one could well adviseedly pray for a mild attack and a happy recovery without too much scarring. On one visit to the cave-temples of Chien-fu-fung near Tunhuang, I well remember finding a cave where the country people had pasted up pieces of yellow paper along the procession of drumambulatory way round the central group of statues, where of old the monks would pass chanting their *shtras*; each paper bore the character "gate", and there were the pages of the diseases as well, for example one for cholera, one for chickenpox, one for whooping-cough, and of course one for smallpox. Each disease that might be expected had its gate, and no doubt the children were taken there and passed along the round, with a station at each gate where the resident Taoist would say the appropriate prayers.

Accordingly, with the background of preventive medicine in mind, it would have occurred naturally enough to some Taoist physician that if one could instil or "engraft" the disease artificially in a very mild form, somehow gently, ensuring a lenient attack, then the patient would have "got it over", and that gate at least would be successfully traversed. He or she could not have had the remotest conception of all that was being set in motion thereby, for the concept of immunity (whether called "mediated" or "humoral") was as yet far ahead in the womb of time.

The first that anybody ever heard of smallpox inoculation in Europe was in letters from China to the Royal Society just before 1700. But no one paid much attention to them (nor to those letters from the Jesuits in China later in the eighteenth century AD), the effective channel of introduction was from the Levant in its second decade, partly through the intermediation of an

aristocratic Englishwoman, the wife of the ambassador at the Sublime Porte, and the culture-area concerned was essentially Turkish, though Greeks and Caucasians had also been carrying on the technique for years beforehand.

Two clear relations from Greek physicians practising in those parts then came to hand, achieving publication in the *Philosophical Transactions* and setting the stage for a whole century of inoculation, first in England and America, then more slowly in France, Germany and the other countries of the Continent. The appalling ravages of smallpox - no other description is adequate - were thus for the first time checked; and then, at the end of the century, in AD 1798, came the discovery of Edward Jenner that cowpox lymph, which was almost complete protection against smallpox itself. Thus the familiar vaccination came into being.

Many medical historians have said that inoculation "was practiced for untold centuries as a folk custom", but this assertion rested exclusively upon what we may call ethnological evidence, deriving from Central and Western Asia, many parts of Africa, and European information supposedly pre-dating the introduction of inoculation. These facts need to be viewed against the background of the knowledge gained from the study of the Chinese text. The practice of smallpox inoculation begins to be documented in China in the Ming period, from the beginning of the sixteenth century AD onwards, i.e. from a time much earlier than any accounts of it from other parts of the world. Moreover it was then accompanied by a tenacious tradition that inoculation had first been practised towards the end of the tenth century AD, by wandering Taoist healers from Szechuan. I believe that this tradition has to be taken seriously.

From the earliest days of medicine in China, there were "forbidden prescriptions", "confidential remedies and techniques", which were handed down from master to apprentice, among the physicians as well as the alchemists, and sometimes sealed with oaths of blood. There were also books passed down in the same way, as in the case of Pien Chieh (sixth century AD), whose master Chhang Sang Chün conferred upon him private scrolls with warnings that their contents should not be revealed to uninitiated practitioners. In early times there had been a strong element of taboo about these "forbidden prescriptions", together with the conviction that indiscreet disclosure would lead to the medicine becoming ineffective. Of course this social situation lent itself to abuse by mystagogues and quacks chiefly interested in making money, but of the existence of secret traditions there can be no doubt, and particularly where a technique was somewhat dangerous, certainly rather daring, they would have applied with particular force.

At all events, from the early sixteenth century AD onwards there grew up in China a specialist literature, the books of which are easily identifiable because their titles usually begin with the words *Chung Tzu* . . . "Transplanting the Smallpox", instead of *Tou Chen* . . . "Smallpox, Measles and Chickenpox". The secrecy was breaking down, the technique was becoming widespread, and this was happening just about two centuries before the spread of smallpox inoculation in Europe. Besides, if we accept the tradition going back to the centuries for this bold exercise in preventive medicine to spread out over the Old World and Africa in all directions, and this in fact is just what I think it did.

An interesting problem arises here with regard to the method used. China is generally involved the implantation of the pustule contents or (more often) the scab-extract in the nostril, or cotton-wool into the nose, so that the nasal mucous membrane was the point of entry. It shows great acumen on the part of the Chinese physicians to have guessed that the respiratory tract was the normal route

of infection, but in the cultures between China and the West, as also in Africa, scarification and introduction of the lymph into the epidermis was the commoner method.

Another matter which I must take up is that of the various theories developed to explain the nature of smallpox - and indeed many other epidemic diseases as well. As soon as one looks into this one finds such an extraordinary similarity between the Chinese and the European ideas that it is hard to believe there were no intellectual contact or interchange. Broadly speaking, there were two possibilities, (1) that the "morbid agent" was internal to the patient, a matter of intrinsic predisposition; or alternatively, (2) that it was external, the action of something in the human environment. The second possibility divided again into (a) an ascription to the air or the seasons, at times unhealthy, even mortally poisonous, and (b) a belief in the activity of invisible malign animals in the surroundings of human beings, liable to break out from their hiding-places whenever the conditions were just right. These three possibilities could be called, the genetic, the meteorological, and the contagial respectively.

The theory of the "innate seed" of smallpox was supported warmly by many eighteenth-century AD medical writers. It was supposed that there was some inherited "seed" or virus, no matter how latent, there, but destined to burst into the flower of smallpox whenever the conditions were favourable, and every individual would have to go through it sooner or later. It was as if there was something sinister, something almost like "original sin" inside each person, struggling to get out, or needing to be expelled; and many physicians opined that this tendency was exacerbated by luxurious living and too rich a diet. It will hardly be believed that Chinese medical writers concurred, without ever having the slightest idea, so far as we know, that the Western doctors were thinking. The Chinese theory involved what was called *ta*, literally "womb" or "seed", due to come out sooner or later in the child; and the metaphor of a flowering plant was all the more telling because smallpox in China was called *thien hua*, "flowers of Heaven", a natural phrase precisely mirrored etymologically in the term *exanthematous*. The aetiological attribution of it to excessive pleasure in the coitus of conception, or else more naturally, to a blood-clot or lump of meconium, not properly removed from the mouth of the foetus at birth.

On the other hand, in Europe there were many authors who supported a meteorological explanation, believing that unseasonable weather released "morbific seeds" or "putrefactive effluvia" into the human environment so that smallpox resulted. A perfect balance in the elements of the circumambient air, those *eu-krasias aeras* which are prayed for in the Liturgy of St John Chrysostom (c. sixth century AD) were needed for health; when it failed, epidemic diseases such as smallpox would result. Precisely the same ideas were found in China, where some physicians ascribed the greatest part in causation to the "pneumata of the season" or the "movements of Heaven". In Europe the idea went back, of course, to Hippocrates, but its most prominent Renaissance advocate was Guillaume de Balilou (1538-1616), a French physician who was the first to describe whooping-cough and introduced the idea of rheumatism. This was in his book *Epidemiorum et Ephemerarum* which was published posthumously in 1640. Later, Thomas Sydenham (1624-89) supported the same conception, introducing a long-lived phrase, "the epidemic constitution", which is the watchword of the atmospheric-miasmatic school, still battling with the contagionists in the nineteenth century.

The third aetiological theory was one which had rather less rationalism in China; it was that of the *contagium vivum* or *contagium animatum*, the idea of living "atoms" or corpuscles, bodiliness in the air, decisively living

rather than dead. Out of this indeed, after many vicissitudes, arose the "germ theory of disease". Without question the turning-point here was the posthumous publication in 1546 of the treatise of Girolamo Fracastoro (1478-1533) entitled *De Sympthia et Antipathia Rerum, Liber Unus: De Contagione et Contagiosis Morbis et Curatione. Libri Tres*. It was a landmark in the history of pathology. He was a "seminarist" because he believed in the existence of widely dispersed seeds of disease, but he also believed in their qualitative specificity, and above all he believed in their life, for he distinguished between a poison which cannot multiply itself and an infection which can do so. Infection was the cause, epidemic disease the result; the seeds were transmissible and self-propagating. Fracastoro also distinguished between three kinds of infection, by direct contact from person to person, by carriage through the air at some distance, and through intermediate objects.

So far as we can see at present, there was nothing quite like *contagium vivum* in China. The classical term for epidemic disease was *i li*, and either of these words could be combined with the omnipresent *pneuma* as *chhi* and *li* *chhi*. *i*, characterized by its "disease radical", is related to the cognate word *i*, to serve, to be in bondage, to ensnare, which was just what an epidemic would do to a population. *li* combines the "disease" radical with the character denoting ten thousand, again perhaps a reference to the number of patients contracting or succumbing. *Tou*, the term for smallpox itself, was obviously derived from *lou*, a bean, because of the pustules. *Jan* means primarily dyeing, secondarily infection, but the common phrase *chhuan jan ping* is comparatively modern, and was not used in the classical Chinese literature. *Jan* itself occurs in this sense, as in the following passage from the *Pao Phu Tzu* (c. AD 320):

Man exists in the midst of *chhi*, and *chhi* is within him as well. Of all things in heaven and earth there are none that do not need *chhi* in order to live and stay alive. He who knows how to circulate the *chhi* internally can nourish his body outwardly, and ordinary people use (breathing) daily, and know nothing about this.

Among the people of Wu and Yieh there is a method of secret conjunction which renders the *chhi* more abundant. He who knows it can pass safely through the worst epidemics, and even share a bed with a sick person without being infected. And several dozen of his companions can similarly be rendered free from fear. This shows what mastery of the *chhi* can do to protect against natural disasters.

It also shows how strong was Ko Hung's belief in the efficacy of the Taoist respiratory techniques, and the clear understanding of person-to-person infection. The recognition of infectivity is quite clear throughout ancient and medieval Chinese literature; that would be evident alone from one of the methods of "inoculation" spoken of in the books, namely of enveloping a child in cloths or clothes which have been worn by a smallpox patient. But what seems to be missing is the idea of specifically living particles. Here I think it is essential to remember that Chinese thought in natural philosophy and science was perennially averse to the idea of particles at all. Atomism must have been introduced many times, as by Buddhist monastic philosophers from India, but it never seriously took root, and Chinese thought remained invariably faithful to a prototype wave theory, the rise and fall of *Yin* and *Yang*, with a conviction of the reality of action at a distance in a continuous medium.

But we must refine these statements about the *contagium vivum*. The particular as such was certainly not characteristic of Chinese natural philosophy, but on the other hand the many-sided concept of *chhi* (spirit, vapour, gas, gaseous emanation, all-pervading influence) was certainly not devoid of the undertone of living. *Chhi* included many sorts of life *chhi*; living in some sense, but not

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particulate living "animalcules" or virulent "atoms". First of all there was the ancient term *chi*. It occurs in the *I Ching* (Book of Changes) where it means the ultimate minute beginnings of things, out of which both good and evil come, and the pictograph itself was originally a drawing of two embryos. Perhaps we find it first in the fifth century BC, in the *Kuan Tzu* book, with the general meaning of germination; and then in the following century in the famous "evolution" passage in the *Chuang Tzu*, where we read that "all species contain certain germs (*chi*)" and "all things come from the germs and return to the germs". This was the inspiration for many later writers, such as Cheng Ching-Wang in the twelfth century AD, and the Neo-Confucians beginning with Chou Tun-i in the eleventh century AD, and the word always carried a certain aura of life and the living with it.

So far as I am aware, this word was hardly ever adopted as a technical term by the physicians, but *miao* took its place in a way, and was much used by them. The dictionary meaning of *miao* is "sprout(s)" but our words "seed(s)" and "germ(s)" also do it justice, and the implication of life is never far off. *Ku miao* and *shiao miao* were common terms for the sprouts or cotyledons of plants and grasses, but the word was also used in animal contexts, as for *yü miao*, tiny fish-fry, just hatched from eggs (*tsu*). But *miao* really came into its own when it began to be used, at least from the fifteenth century AD onwards, in the sense of inoculum.

As we already know, inoculation was always termed *chung tu*, using *chung miao*, the implantation, or better the transplantation, of the sprouts or germs. This linguistic usage is easier to understand when one recalls the procedures of rice-farming, particularly the planting out of the seedlings at much larger intervals from each other than they had when first sprouting in the seed-bed paddy-field (*miao thien*). Chao Hsueh-Min, in the *Pen Tshao Kang Mu Shih I*, says in his section on "treasures of perfume-like influences" (*shang hsiang*) that "the seeds (*yeu* or *chia*) of the smallpox pustules are called *miao*, and the outbreaking of the smallpox is called *chung*". So also Cheng Wang-I, in his *Chung Tou Shu*, says that those who choose the *miao* are careful to take the seeds from children who have already been inoculated, and these are the true *chung miao*, in contrast to those taken from natural or epidemic smallpox cases, which are called *shih miao*. Chu I-Liang, in the *Chung Tou Shih Fu*, recommends as the best ripe *miao* that which has been transformed (*lien*) by seven passages through inoculated persons. This, then, is *shih miao*.

Read in the opposite sequence, and with *chung* pronounced in a different tone, the words *chung miao* meant various "species" of sprouts. And indeed a great part of the skill and expertise of the earliest inoculators consisted in selecting or choosing the seeds (*ie miao*, *shien miao*). Yü Mou-Khun says that one should select seeds which are hard and thick, with the form of a snail; this damp irregularly shaped ones are to be avoided. Chu I-Liang says that the size matters little, but they should be thick, rounded and of a clear

purplish colour. The *I Tsung Chin Chien* recommends those which are large and thick, waxy and slightly bluish in colour. Greatly to be avoided was the *shih miao*, seeds taken from the pustules of severe epidemic smallpox patients, and many warnings were given against the use of such material. The best kind of inoculum was termed *pure*, *shun miao*, or medicinal, *tan miao*; other names were *shen miao* (numinous transplant) or *hsien miao* (transplant of the holy immortal). Judging from the later descriptions, these must have meant an attenuated virus, either obtained from the seeds of patients who had already been inoculated, or artificially weakened in virulence by special methods. Finally, after Jenner, there was *niu tou miao*, cowpox sprouts, an appellation which shows the continuity between inoculation and vaccination in the minds of the Chinese physicians.

There is something to be said for the suggestion that in their careful choice of the "best" seeds the Chinese inoculators were selecting for variola minor as against the major form. Al-Razi may have already noted the difference, but the Chinese physicians were certainly aware that there were two types of the disease, as we see in Shih Chin-Kung's *Tou Kho Ta Chien*, where he distinguishes between the light (*ching*) and the heavy (*chung*) affliction. This selection may not have been conscious. But it was certainly a classic example of the widespread phrase *tu kung tu*, using poison to combat poison. As we have seen, the beneficial "poison" had to be most carefully chosen, and all the books give strict instructions that inoculation should never be undertaken when natural smallpox is already within the house, only under suitable conditions of relative isolation some time beforehand.

It may come as something of a surprise to see how elaborate was the theorizing in traditional Chinese medicine about the nature of the inoculation process. To elucidate this, we have to recall a conception already encountered in the context of urinary endocrinology, that, namely, of *yin tao*, "leading something out by the same way that it previously came itself". It was maintained that urine — and a fortiori the protein, steroid and other hormones isolated from it — can "lead out the undue heat (*yin huo*) which is the cause of the illness, downwards to be excreted and got rid of"; because they had already passed that way themselves. It was their very nature to follow the path of urinary excretion, then they could perhaps combine with another substance or *chhi* which was causing the trouble, and lead it forth. These ideas originated rather early, because we find a clear statement of them in *Chiu Ching I Shu*, the writings of the physician Chiu Ching, who died in AD 501, and they are expressed again in the works of Sun Su-Mo (c AD 650) and Chu Chen-Hong (fourteenth century AD).

There can be no doubt that smallpox inoculation came out into the open, as it were, some time during the first half of the sixteenth century AD. To see clearly what happened afterwards, the story has to be pieced together from flashbacks and hindsight, traditions reported by medical writers, and

statements about the practice of families in which the calling of physician — and inoculator — had been passed down through several successive generations. The very earliest reference (apart from the Taoist tradition) seems to be in the book of Wan Chih-tan on smallpox and measles, *Tou Chen Shih I Hsin Fa*, first published in 1549 AD but reprinted as late as 1687. Speaking of treatments, he casually mentions that smallpox inoculation is liable to bring on menstruation unexpectedly in women. His book has no section on that subject, but from this remark it is clear that the practice must have been quite common in his time, even though no one was seeing their way to writing about it. By 1721, the date of Yü Mou-Khun's book *Tou Kho Chin Ching Fu Chi Chieh* (Collected Explanations of the Mnemonic Verses entitled "Golden Mirror of Smallpox and Related Diseases"), much was being written on it, and here there was a section entitled *Chung Tou Shu*. In this we read:

Smallpox inoculation arose in the Lung-Ching reign-period (AD 1567 to 1572), especially at Thai-phing hsien in Ning-kuo fu. We do not know now the names of the inoculators, but they got it from an eccentric and extraordinary man who had himself derived it from the alchemical adepts (*tan chia*). Since then it has spread widely all over the country. Even down to now the inoculating physicians came mostly from Ning-kuo, but not a few Li-ssang people have learnt it and appropriated it. The strain of inoculum (*miao chung*) which was obtained from the strange and eccentric man has been kept and used to this day, but you have to pay two or three pieces of gold to get enough for inoculating one person. Physicians who want to make some profit pass it through the children of their own relatives in winter and summer, and have no mishaps. However, others who want to make money steal away the seeds from (severe) smallpox cases and use the material directly; this is called *pai miao* (bad inoculum), and in such cases there will be 15 deaths in 100 patients.

Thus we can say with fair confidence that inoculation for smallpox was a general practice in China in the time of Thomas Linacre, John Caius and Henry VIII, which was certainly long before the days of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The next step concerns the Chu family, who practised medicine one after the other. Inoculation is described in the book of Chu Shun-Chia entitled *Tou Chen Ting Lun* (Precise Discussion of Smallpox and Related Diseases) and printed in AD 1713, but Chu himself had lived a good deal earlier, having been born before the end of the Ming in 1644. Furthermore, his book was added as an appendix to a similar book by an older Chu, Chu Hui-Ming, dating from about 1580 and entitled *Tou Chen Chuan Hsin Lu* (Records of Personal Clinical Experience of Smallpox and Related Diseases). This was one of those cases where the profession of medicine ran in families through several generations, so it is highly

probable that the elder Chu knew and practised inoculation, though living at a time when it was not generally written about. Again, in 1621 there appeared a novel (written in 1610 by Chou Hui) entitled *Chin-Ling So Chih* (Troublesome Affairs in Nanking); this mentions two cases of inoculation during the Wan-Li reign-period (1573–1619) in which the children got the infection badly. Similarly, the *Cheng Tzu Thung* dictionary, published in 1627, has this to say about smallpox:

The treatises of the adepts (*fang shu*) attribute it to an innate flaw or toxin of the womb (*hal tu*). Some people never get the disease (in spite of this). As for the numerous magical way of dealing with smallpox (*shen tou fa*), they take the liquid pustule contents (*tsu chhi*) and stuff it into the nose, so that simply by breathing the patient will get infected with a light eruption (and be protected).

Apart from its early date, this passage is interesting in its explicit recognition of the role of the respiratory passages in the infection. At this point we are entirely contemporary with the physician Ong Chung-Jen, whose "Golden Mirror of Smallpox" with the famous mnemonic verses accompanying it, was the basis for the work of Yü Mou-Khun already mentioned. Implications of inoculation occur in his text, but with Yü they become highly explicit.

*** The moment has now come to examine the persistent conviction that before the earliest extant writings on inoculation for smallpox there had been some five centuries of its practice under conditions of restriction and secrecy. The central figure round whom the tradition revolved was Wang Tan (Wan Ching Kung, AD 957 to 1017), a famous prime minister whose civil service career covered the reigns of two Sung emperors, Thai Tsung and Chen Tsung.

His connection with smallpox inoculation came about because his first son had died of smallpox, so when Wang Su came, the father sought everywhere for some means of preventing a similar calamity. He invited all kinds of physicians and shamanic technicians (*wu fang*) to show him what they could do, till finally the gods were compassionate and sent him a Taoist hierophant (*shen jen*) who carried out inoculation; after which the technique was handed down from one practitioner to another with stringent confidential precautions. Such is the account as Chu I-Liang gave it in his *Chung Tou Hsin Fa*, but all the books on inoculation have the same, albeit with numerous variations. The oldest statement may go back to about 1680 as it occurs in Chu Shun-Chia's *Tou Chen Ting Lun*, not printed till 1713; here the inoculator is called a *shen i* (holy physician) or a *chien miao* (numinous old woman) or a *chi hsien* (planchette immortal). Whoever it was came from O-mei Shan, that famous mountain in south-western Szechuan, mainly, though by no means wholly, connected with Buddhism.

If we look a little more closely at the O-mei Shan tradition, we can see the Buddhist connection may be rather misleading. The syncretistic tendencies in Chinese religious life were always so strong that there are many evidences of Taoist presence on and around that mountain. There are place-names, such as Hsien Feng Shih (the rock of the peak of the holy immortals), and buildings such as the Chiu Lao Hsien Fu (palace of the nine ancient immortals). There are caves of Taoist hermits such as Li Hsien Tung and Ko Hsien Tung; there was a tradition that the great alchemist-physician Sun Su-Mo did some of his alchemy at O-mei Shan, as witness a *Wan Tan Shih*. Moreover, Taoist books or inscriptions are named, such as an *I Shan Wu Khou Tao Jen Shu*, commemorating five passages through the range, or a *Tan Ching* (alchemical manual) of Yin Ching-Sheng. All in all, there is a strong, if subordinate, element of Taoism about O-mei Shan and its neighbourhood.

Certainly there were votive temples for inoculators. The *Hu-shou Fu Chih* tells us that towards the end of the Ming there was a young man of that city who ran away from his family in 1644 because of his irresistible urge to become a physician. His name was Hui Phu; and he carried out many inoculations before disappearing in 1712. He was supposedly seen in 1723 in Nanking, though that would hardly

have been possible. More interesting perhaps is the fact that at least since the time of Khang-Hsi's accession in 1644 there were votive temples (*miao*) at Huchow and Suchow dedicated to an "immortal teacher of inoculation" (Chung Tou Hsien Shih) and to a "mountain recluse of O-mei Shan" (Sung O-mei Shan Jen). The latter says the writer, often looked very like that of Shun-Yang Tau Shih, the famous adept and alchemist Li Tsu-fu, whose dates are rather uncertain, but belong in the eighth century AD. Thang time. Here perhaps we are thread linking inoculation with the activities of the Taoist alchemists.

Although, as we have seen, the one and even more the prevention of smallpox, was closely associated through the ages with Taoist religion and magic, that did not stop the appearance of the inoculation technique precisely in that milieu. Since this must go back to the time when the Taoist church was founded, the idea that everything goes best when least interfered with by man. For the idea that illness was a punishment for evil-doing could flourish — indeed one wonders whether it was — essentially an Indian importation, perhaps connected with Buddhism, but before long Taoist technicality reassured itself, and the inspiring thought arose that man could borrow some of the tools in Nature's workshop, and by following her, bring about something effectual for human benefit. After all, the great Taoist doctrine of *wu wei* — "do nothing contrary to Nature" — avoided the setting of a hundred men to work at water-raising machinery when the same result could be achieved by taking the water off higher up the stream and leading it by a lateral device canal to its desired destination along higher contour level. So also by using Nature's own variety of permanent protection against the worst forms of the disease could be conferred. If this was "thinking only thoughts after him", as some past Western Christian might have put it, who would begrudge the Taoists the candles and incense?

*** There can be no doubt that the Chinese documentary evidence for the practice of inoculation goes back much further than in any other civilisation, and before that begins there is still a background of five centuries of confidential practice. Two centuries then, were available, if not seven, in the inoculation of smallpox to reach the Ottoman Turks in time for their hand the discovery on the part of Europeans, as we know happened. The Old Silk Road was a ready means of communication along which the practice could have been transmitted westward. Similarly, there were no impediments to the passage of the technique to India. But the data in these cases, and in all the others, without exception, are essentially ethnographic. No assured historical evidence exists to generate reliable datings. Certainly one cannot rule out a whole series of independent originations, perhaps especially the one of lymph, seeds, or clothes of one kind or another, without the deposition of the virus on a mucous membrane, or the introduction into the epidermis by skin capillaries, but without further discoveries in the accounts of medieval travellers, that will be extremely difficult to prove. The only hope for literary references other than the Chinese is in India, and there the philological difficulties are of such references, even if they could be found, are well known. In sum, the most judicious conclusion seems to be that the inoculation for smallpox did indeed originate in a Taoist milieu, or at shortly before the early Sung, and that from that focus it spread outwardly by diffusion, sometimes as a developed practice but often in dilute and fragmentary forms, throughout the Old World and many parts of Africa.

The writer wishes to thank his colleague Dr Lu Gwei-Djen, without whose collaboration this story could not have been unravelled. The text above is an abridged version of a lecture given by Dr Needham in Hong Kong in 1979, and published in a booklet, China and the Origins of Immunology, 1980 (39pp, Hong Kong University Press HK\$12, 1979 280).

Great Peace and destruction

Richard Harris
PRESCOTT CLARKE AND J. S. GREGORY (Editors)

Western Reports on the Taiping
454pp. Croom Helm. £19.95.
0 7099 0748 6

The Reverend Issachar J. Roberts, an American Baptist missionary, could set about his evangelical task more vigorously after the Opium War had begun to "open up" China to thrusting westerners. Some years after that conflict in 1847 a Chinese gentleman came to him in Canton "professing a desire to be taught the Christian religion" while admitting that he had already had visions and on reading the Bible had found his visions confirmed by it.

This was Hung Xiquan, a disappointed young man after his failure to pass the imperial examinations that would have earned him the authority and status of a Mandarin. Fired by a belief in his divinely inspired power, Hung began gathering an armed following in his native province of Guangxi. By January, 1851, the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace could be set up; little more than two years later it had occupied Nanjing as its capital and had left its stamp on large areas of south-east China. To the missionaries, merchants and diplomats moving through China's newly opened doors the threat posed to the warring Manchu rulers of China was obvious.

Western Reports on the Taiping reflects the character and progress of the Taiping Rebellion as it could be perceived by contemporary British, American and French observers. Most interested were the missionaries, equipped with the language and stimulated by the reported Christian foundation of Taiping doctrine. What were they to make of Hung's claim to have had direct contact with God and to be the younger brother of Jesus? Nor was this Christian assertion Hung's only claim: to the Chinese he more often represented himself as a scion of a princely house of the Ming dynasty, conquered by China's Manchurian rulers two hundred years before. By this claim Hung could present himself as the true and legitimate emperor of China.

Such a mixture of the indigenous and the external in Taiping ideology is not the sole reason for the fascination that the rebellion has exercised ever since on Chinese and foreign historians. The parallel of the success of an imported Marxism as the inspiration of China's latest revolution excited interest as much within China as outside. From being crudely dismissed by Mao as a rebellion "led by the working class", research in China on the Taiping rebellion, and the publication of surviving documents still goes on; conferences have been held in China — there was one in 1979 in which Western historians participated — and in March this year yet another seminar met in Nanjing to mark the 130th anniversary of the Taiping march northward to set up a new capital in Nanking.

To the missionaries and diplomats coming to grips with China in the 1850s, the Taiping Rebellion offered a splendid drama in a relatively accessible area of the country. It soon became apparent that it was a vast rebellion — vast in the numbers involved on both sides, vast in the number killed, many more than in actual battles, vast in its destructiveness, not least in the devastated countryside through which Baron Richthofen walked some years after the end of the rebellion in 1871.

The valleys are a complete wilderness... groups of stately white-washed houses are in ruins... the road connecting the district cities are narrow footpaths, completely overgrown with grasses fifteen feet high, or with shrubs through which it is difficult to penetrate... It is difficult to conceive of a more horrid destruction of life and property than has been perpetrated in these districts, and yet they are only a very small proportion of the great area of the country that has shared a similar fate.

These reports, collected and edited by J. S. Gregory and his colleague in Australia, the late Prescott Clarke, include many that have been drawn on in Gregory's own *Great Britain and the Taipings* (1969) and S. Y. Teng's *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers* (1971). Nevertheless, the chronological assembly does reveal the rise and fall of Western interest, the variety of opinions aroused and, only too obviously, the difficulty of getting at the truth in a Chinese context, not least of a movement whose leader proved himself to be a deranged and self-absorbed recluse. Almost all are from British, American and French sources, the three countries then in the forefront of exploiting China's forcibly opened doors.

Historians in China are still discussing the causes and the outcome of the Taiping Rebellion and its relationship to events leading up to the Communist success in 1949. Equally, there are many parallels in the Western response to the Taipings in the 1850s and 60s and the opinions common a century later of Mao's "new China". There was inevitably the same initial enthusiasm, fortified by the Christian source of Taiping doctrine. "What a

moral revolution!" wrote the Reverend W. H. Medhurst:

to induce 100,000 Chinamen, for months and years together, to give up tobacco, opium, lust and covetousness; to deny themselves in lawful gratification, and what is dearer to a Chinaman's heart than life itself, to consent to live without dollars, and all share and share alike, braving death in its worst form, and preserving therein without flinching. There may be defective errors of greater or lesser magnitude... even if only half were true... It is the wonder of the age!

Whatever puritanism was still enjoined on the masses under Taiping domination, corruption soon set in at the top. Hung was busy building himself a large palace and filling it with a harem, once Nanjing had become settled as the capital. Protestants could remain ignorant of such states on the puritan picture. For Roman Catholics, puritanism was dominant from the beginning if only because they identified Taiping Christianity with entirely Protestant origins.

In general, disappointment set in among all inquirers as the severity of

Taiping punishments became known, even the most trifling offences earned decapitation. Very soon rivalry among the "kings", the independent commanders who ran their own military campaigns like warlords of the 1920s, led to internal struggles and the murder of one of the most effective Taiping leaders together with hundreds of his followers.

Not least interesting among the parallels brought out in these extracts were co-temporary Western reactions to the corrupt and ineffectual imperial government forces sent to suppress the Rebellion. Many of these exactly match charges commonly made by Western diplomats and journalists in the 1940s of the Guomindang.

Equally evocative of both the old and the new China were the problems of getting at the information and establishing some kind of diplomatic parleys with the Taiping leaders. The diplomats knew only too well the difficulties that had baffled their predecessors, not least in ensuring that rank was honoured and international dignity respected. Unfortunately, the Opium war had not yet punctured the uncomprehending, arrogant superiority of the Chinese. With the

Taipings these envoys faced just as much risk of being treated as tributaries. Several reports illustrate the diplomatic minutiae that eventually won due rights for the British and French representatives.

"The idolatry of this country must come to an end", Issachar Roberts had said hopefully as he saw the Taipings spreading their power. "Who knows but this is the Lord's set time?" Alas! when appointed in 1852 as foreign affairs adviser to the Taipings two years before Nanjing fell, Roberts was ignored; seeing the regime at hand he realized with horror that his hopes had been without any foundation. "I have turned over entirely a new leaf", he wrote, "and am now as much opposed to them as ever I was in favour of them." Hung, he concluded, was "a crazy man, entirely unfit to rule."

All the reports were written in an era before a standard romanization of Chinese had been adopted. A glossary is provided, giving Wade-Giles and Pinyin spellings. Since Hung Xiquan appears in fourteen different spellings in the original texts and many other names are almost unrecognizable, it is indispensable to the reader familiar with Taiping history.

The overwhelming proportion of Chinese live in the countryside, and almost a third of the book (the first section) is devoted to experiences in Sichuan province, which Bernstein sees as being representative of the whole. Sichuan is a very standard large proportion of China yet the urge to generalize masks the regional variety characteristic of Chinese society.

Were it not for Bernstein's claim to be searching "for the truth about China" all this would be only mildly irritating. For the rural hinterland remains relatively inaccessible; and much of the information he presents is inherently interesting. On the other hand, no account of life (for the Chinese) in Peking is aided by simple repetition of the legends which pervade the foreigner's ghetto in that city. Thus Bernstein claims that the ordinary people do not eat Peking Duck in the various Peking Duck restaurants. They may not eat in the "foreigners' restaurants or those reserved for the privileged, but there are Peking Duck restaurants where "ordinary people" do go.

Finally, Bernstein's argument — which is the argument of all those who espouse what may be described as the "state system, love the people" school of thought — is unconvincing quite simply because it is overstated. It is as one-sided and unbalanced as the view which prevailed before Mao's death. And both views share the untenable and fundamentally patronizing premise that — in Bernstein's words — the Chinese are "The Lovable People".

Through revisionist eyes

D. S. G. Goodman

RICHARD BERNSTEIN
From the Center of the Earth:
The Search for the Truth about China
260pp. Hutchinson. £9.95.
0 316 09194 4

Despite, or more likely because of, its relative lack of impact on the international economy, the People's Republic of China has been a subject of fascination to many in the West. Not without justice China is (and has been) seen as not only distant but also different. During the past decade journalists, politicians, academics, and even media "stars" have been ready to record their impressions in an attempt to describe or explain that difference.

Throughout most of the 1970s the prevailing orthodoxy was that the People's Republic was a revolutionary socialist democracy proceeding to the utopia in its own distinctive way. Though a few visitors, most notably Edward Luttwak and Simon Leys, did not allow their critical faculties to be impaired by "The China difference", on the whole the People's Republic, the Chinese Communist Party and Mao all received sympathy if not favour. In consequence, the Chinese were presented as being happy and satisfied — a population with something to live for, in contrast to the West. Such images counteracted the dramatic changes of China since the Mao era. If anything the orthodox view — at least for journalists and academics — has swung to the opposite extreme. The scanner side of life in China is now brought much more to the fore, and the decade of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) is derided as totalitarian excess. The Chinese Communist Party is no longer seen as a mobilizer of the people but as a moribund and repressive bureaucracy.

From the Center of the Earth is the latest in a rapidly growing list of exposés of politics and society in the People's Republic. During the 1970s the author worked for *Time* magazine in Hong Kong, and in 1980 went to Peking as correspondent-in-residence. Subtitled "The Search for the Truth about China", Richard Bernstein's book is written explicitly to counterbalance the idealized and idealistic images of China that were once so prevalent. Interestingly, *From the Center of the Earth* is also an enthralling journeyman for the author himself. As Bernstein freely admits, he has been one of those whose critical faculties were disoriented when visiting the People's Republic. At that time he wrote what he now describes as

a "somewhat embarrassing series of articles about the trip".

To the extent that Bernstein was a perpetrator of the old myth one cannot but respect (and indeed welcome) his attempt to re-evaluate the past, both China's in general and his own experiences there in particular. However, to the extent that he is now in danger of helping to create a new set of myths (instead of scepticism or open-mindedness) one must be more cautious in reading this account of Chinese society. To be sure, most of his criticisms of the regime, in the present as well as the past, are well-founded. Moreover, the straightforward reporting on which much of this book is based is both interesting and informative. For example, the description of his ascent of Emei Shan, one of China's traditionally sacred mountains, is wonderfully vivid. More particularly, the reports of interviews, both formal and informal, with individual Chinese provide fascinating insights into life there. Thus, the third and final section of the book, which is entitled "Private Lives" and based almost exclusively on such interviews, is easily the strongest. None the less, taken as a whole this account is not completely convincing.

Almost of necessity those books which have sought to criticize and expose the People's Republic in the post-Mao era have tended to be stridently opinionated. Consequently, errors of fact or dubious interpretations tend to distract from, and indeed undermine, the thrust of the argument. Errors of fact do not abound here, but it does not foster trust to

read, for example, that the "Hundred Flowers" Campaign occurred in 1956 (p65) rather than 1957; or that Sichuan province was wrested from warlord control and brought under Chiang Kai-shek's central government in 1927 (p62) rather than a decade later. Similarly, the suggestion that before the Cultural Revolution the current Premier, Zhao Ziyang, "tolled away inconspicuously in China's local-level bureaucracy" (p68) seems somewhat odd given that Zhao had in fact been the leading party cadre in the relatively high-status province of Guangdong and a leading regional cadre. Odder still perhaps is Bernstein's contention that the recent re-evaluation of Mao was "less bold" than Khrushchev's criticism of Stalin in 1956 (p125).

The lack of access to sources is, of course, one reason why myths abound. None the less, Bernstein, like so many others, both before and since Mao's death, overgeneralizes from specific cases and his own experiences. For example, he recognizes the problems inherent in the fact that his interviewees are a self-selecting sample: only certain Chinese are prepared to talk to a foreign journalist. Yet he makes little attempt to approach critically the information he received. Thus, he cites the difficulties a Chinese friend had in obtaining a roasted (Peking) duck in order to entertain him at dinner. The story, as related by the Chinese, is entirely plausible. However, it is also possible that they elaborated in order to impress or to please him. Moreover, the China described here is predominantly urban China, whereas

the Chinese have many methods of divination, none of which can truly be termed astrology. This fascinating and scholarly book covers the whole subject, including the importance of the Chinese calendar, and then sets out to help the reader cast his own horoscope by the traditional Chinese method.

Translated by N. Derek Poulsen

The Chinese have many methods of divination, none of which can truly be termed astrology. This fascinating and scholarly book covers the whole subject, including the importance of the Chinese calendar, and then sets out to help the reader cast his own horoscope by the traditional Chinese method.

the names of most of the chapters read like a catalogue of matters having more or less bearing on almost every field of Chinese study. Never to my knowledge have these matters as a whole been so lucidly set forth in either French or English!

John Blofeld in the Foreword

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A Cadre School Life: Six Chapters is an outstanding book, quite unlike anything else from twentieth-century China available in English translation. It needs no allowances made for it; requires no background knowledge to make its impact on the foreign reader. Appearing to be a matter-of-fact account of a spell of enforced "re-education" in a cadre school—a kind of labour-camp that was intended to turn intellectuals and government officials into revolutionaries—it is in fact an extremely well-written and carefully constructed memoir that uses the experience of an elderly academic and her husband to condemn the whole range of political that until a few years ago permeated ignorance and poverty in China. It is also superbly translated.

Because her message is so strong Yang Jiang expresses it in the quietest of voices, letting facts speak for themselves. Sometimes her main points are made almost asides. After describing how her son-in-law had been in getting her husband's belongings shipped off to the countryside, she mentions briefly that a little later he was driven to suicide in his university because of a false accusation. A chapter about a stray dog she adopted leads to a telling indication of the state of the countryside twelve years after the formation of people's communes: peasants using their dogs to lick their babies' bottoms dead.

One reason why Yang Jiang's book works so well is because she has found the right voice and avoided the traps that beset anyone who wants to be treated as a writer in China, where being a writer can be a profession, a way of life, a distinguishable from writing itself. Writing is a public act, and a writer a public figure. Commitment to socially accepted moral and political aims is expected, and when work is assessed it will often be more on its political and moral content than on its artistic. Nor will discussion of the writing normally be distinguished from discussion of the author. One can still be worried off a new novel because its author is supposedly a bad person; though fortunately the procedure whereby the editorial staff of a magazine would check with the personnel department of a potential contributor's employers before printing his or her work has now been ended.

Perhaps this is a pre-capitalist approach to writing, which is not seen as a commodity. Writers do not own their work, and cannot control its reprinting, but are paid by the yard on first publication. Thereafter the work is at the mercy of editors and officials, which can be just as alienating for a writer as the honest production of a literary commodity. It could be that we are coming to the end of this era if the tendency towards reform in Chinese society makes writing a little less ritualized and writers can only make a living by their pens if they produce, instead of being supported by public funds as peopled members of their local writers' union. It could also happen that it will be less tempting for a writer with any reputation to waste his or her life turning out safe, short pieces written to keep the editors of literary journals happy, going to conferences, and giving endless talks to keen young aspirants. We might even be spared the most pointless of all current literary genres: the boringly innocuous pieces written by those returning from a trip abroad with a delegation. These have to give no offence to the host country while avoiding laying the author open to the charge of being soft on foreigners.

But such dangers are nothing compared with the real perils that writers have faced in the past sixty years. Because the authorities have taken them seriously they have at times been treated with the same harshness that was meted out to political enemies. The Guomindang was haphazardly murderous; but in the anti-rightist campaign of 1957-58 and the Cultural Revolution, repression reached much further and was far more effective. Were there to be a return to the politics of lunacy of those now known as the "reformers", and they do know it. The collective courage of writers and editors is an important factor in preventing such a catastrophe, and they have shown in the past few years that if pushed too hard they are now much more willing to stand up for each other than they and their predecessors were during and before the Cultural Revolution. One recent result of this firmness has been to bring about the overthrow of the editorial board of a journal supported by the army's political department, which had tried hard to whip up campaigns of vitriolic denunciations against some writers, denunciations that virtually demanded criminal sanctions on their departments. But even now it is risky to write too boldly: Maoist orthodoxy is not yet dead.

For reasons that are in part no fault of hers—the spent three years under house arrest at the hands of the authorities in the 1930s, and over twenty years of exile and jail under the People's Republic that she helped to establish—Ding Ling has not written very much since her first story was published in 1927, and of her oeuvre, what has appeared by 1948. Yet she has been regarded as an important writer for all that time, even in the

years when little of her writing was in print in her own country. Most of her long life has been controversial, and the controversy has not really distinguished between the writer and her work. Indeed, it could be said that Ding Ling has embodied many of the dilemmas of being a writer in China, and that being a writer has itself been her life's work. This difficult role is one she has paid a high price to play and in which she has attempted to fulfil conflicting demands. Because it is the role that counts it is virtually impossible to make a purely artistic assessment of her writing; and because the role itself has been so hard to define she has appeared as a contradictory figure.

Yi-Tsi Mei Feuerwerker's illuminating study of Ding Ling's fiction divides her writing life into four periods. In the first, from 1927 to 1930, she explored subjectivism, most effectively when seeing the world through the eyes of educated young women trying to find a role. Of her characters of this period the best known remains "Miss Sophie", whose fictional diary is a morbidly brilliant re-revelation by a consumptive, intelligent and apparently doomed woman trying through the process of writing a diary to understand herself. What made the story shocking in 1928 was that it dealt with the sexual desire felt by a "respectable", educated woman for a man she knows to be worthless. Sophie—what a splendidly 1920s name—boasts to her diary of her knowledge of sex. She rails against her own weakness while recording it, contrasting her purely physical feeling for the man with the heartfelt longing for a beloved woman friend now dead.

What makes the story retain the interest of readers today is not the admission of feelings no longer taboo but the subtlety with which Ding Ling allows the reader to get to know the like of Sophie (herself) maintains, in the apparent impossibility of finding a life in which head, heart and body are all satisfied. Sophie is neither condemned—except in her own harsh judgment—nor glorified. In the last resort we are never quite able to admire or to reject her. As Feuerwerker points out, it is significant that Sophie is vain, writing in her unsuccessful attempt to sort herself out. In this period Ding Ling accepted a nineteenth-century European view of what a writer should be.

She has been saddled with Sophie ever since, often being identified with her and subjected to abusive personal attacks by the guardians of morality. Whether or not Ding Ling was in her youth to some extent Sophie—which she has not denied and, in a little-known sequel to the diary, partly admitted by referring to events in her own life as events in Sophie's—it is the character that Sophie remains stubbornly alive and still persuades readers to react to her as to a real person. Yet even when exploring this area of behaviour, Ding Ling was rejecting it as her central concern. Her sense of the writer's duty was changing, just as she had changed her own life by taking up with the young Communist writer, Hu Yepin.

From 1930 till her kidnapping by government agents in 1933, Ding Ling wrote herself into the Communist Party's left-wing literary movement for the cause for which Hu Yepin was killed in 1931. During this period she tried to create a more engaged style of literature, dealing with larger topics and the political and social struggles of the people and the sacrifices of revolutionaries on their behalf. In political revolutionary literature, as in the writing within the Chinese tradition of the scholar, upholding true moral values against corrupt rulers had been a generally long as time as to the earlier, more conservative, and that the story of the revolution is simplified for propaganda. In her first years she had many of the best intellectuals, they chose to stay and live under the new order that the Communist Party was

now saw her literary role as that of a fighter, praising the people and condemning the old order.

Some of the results are artistic failures, and none of them is sadder than her attempt to describe the machine-gunning of Hu Yepin and his comrades. Because she saw her job as writer as a heroic and militant one, and also because she was too close to the horror herself, she lays on the emotional colouring so thickly that the reader instinctively draws back and is left only half-moved by what should have been overwhelming. But even at this period she could deal most effectively with the direct experience of the widowed mother in a hostile city, struggling against despair and forcing herself to carry on when it is the last thing she wants to do.

When her writing began again after her three years' "disappearance" it was in the service of the resistance to Japan in the Communist Party's rural bases. Here again we find that the harder she tries to play the public role of war propagandist the less effective her writing is. Perhaps that does not matter; she was not writing for posterity. But even at this time, there were moments when she produced work of great value. One of these is "When I was in Xia Village", a disturbing account of the cold reception the village gives to an eighteen-year-old girl returning diseased and humiliated after a year spent as a prostitute with the Japanese occupation forces for the sake of gathering military information for the partisans. The story is full of compassion and also deliberately evasive on some sensitive questions, which serves to give it a depth and mystery that spelling everything out would have destroyed. Was this done for artistic considerations, or was it like the narrator (who seems very much like Ding Ling herself) maintains, out of respect for the girl who had taken a sympathetic outsider into her confidence? In any event the story is strengthened as it also is by the author's feeling that even within the revolution women had to be protected from being used by men, as well as from the contempt of other women, who prided themselves on not having been raped.

After 1941 Ding Ling did not write much. The novel *The Sun Shines on the Sanggan River*, published in 1948, has a certain documentary value, but after that she was trapped by her role as a distinguished writer. For a few years she was a senior literary official; and for much longer a prisoner or an exile because she fell foul of the dominant group. During those decades she was often presented outside China as a persecuted dissident or a liberal. This was wrong. Persecuted she certainly was, but more for factional than ideological reasons; and since her return to public life in 1979 she has been tireless in proclaiming her orthodoxy.

Yang Jiang, the author of *A Cadre School Life: Six Chapters*, is much better known as an academic specialist in, and translator of, foreign literature than as a writer in her own right. Over thirty years ago her husband, the scholarly novelist Qian Zhongshu, satirized the weaknesses and pretensions to intellectual status in his novel, *The Begged City*. What was essentially a comic work. In the years of Guomindang rule writers and academics could still fairly be treated as targets of satire. To be sure, they and their children might die of hunger or untimely diseases, and a few brave spirits fell for the government assassins; but most of them still enjoyed salaries, respect even when their status was so shaken by inflation that finding enough to eat was a class during the anti-rightist movement of 1957-58 and the Cultural Revolution were hardly a subject for satire. Yang's tone is much more appropriate.

Both Yang and Qian could have left China before 1949. Instead, like so many of the best intellectuals, they chose to stay and live under the new order that the Communist Party was

bringing to the cities from the countryside. She was to have a hard time not as hard as many—a campaign followed political and intellectual during the Cultural Revolution. Like most who worked with their hands dirty by getting her hands dirty in the camp run by her husband's countrymen of Henan. This is what she commemorates in her chapters of reminiscence.

What she tells is not so much into a horror story. The tone is not reasonable and then a posturing. She has none of the naivety of the committed writer of the 1930s: she simply tells what happened without any ordinary, even better, pervades the book makes it more effective. Though he is very short it has much more many longer ones. Yang has no pretence to martyrdom, one feels that she has written record of what was not so much perfectly normal as a reality, countless other members of less privileged groups in the went down to the countryside. This is not the world of the pen and labour-camp; it has yet to publish *Lu Xun's* *Ivan Denisovich*—and the book describes more the real life planning and allness than the cruelty. After all, Yang has managed to see her husband every day and she continued to her relatively high salary. What is the utter waste involved here? Impressions. Not only was it intellectual talent wasted but they left the camp the whole flattened by a tractor. Nothing to repay those enormous debts.

Were they remoulded by the lower-middle peasant, as had intended? Teachers were interested in robbing that in their "students" who had a constant guard against marauders taking their building materials, and contents of the latrine. Yang did not blame them. They were poorer than the city but their intellectuals were not so much changed. They now know deal more about the life of the people and feel more confident enlightenment they should needed. They have also become tougher.

It is a great sign of progress that book could have been a popular literary magazine in the and its appearance in a good translation is most welcome. It also shows that it is possible to do of the writer's life, as alienated, or limited to a few talents in China. My son, derived mainly from the dipping into the *Journal*, is that writer and have been recovering their past few months and development of a new literature more flourishing anything in the thirty years since will continue. Of course there will be those critics who will say that literature to justify their writers, but the demand for the truth will be felt and it will not be completely satisfied. They will want to express themselves, judge from the number of official journals turning out to be self against society this tendency will be quite strong.

But while younger writers are intensely critical of what is from the past, few would deny they have a social responsibility of the most interesting subject in part few years has been the reconciling being true to what which is much higher priority than was before the Cultural Revolution. Fulfilling the role expected of the as a public figure.

Thoughts spread wide

D. E. Pollard

LU XUN
Selected Poems
Translated by W. J. F. Jenner
160pp. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press
0 8351 1002 8

LU HSIUN
A Brief History of Chinese Fiction
Translated by Yang Hsien-yi and Gladys Yang
437pp. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press.

Wang Yao, in his foreword to the *Selected Poems*, calls Lu Xun "a great writer, thinker and revolutionary" (thus echoing Mao Zedong). W. J. F. Jenner, in his own introduction, calls him "the giant of modern Chinese letters". On the dust-cover to the *Brief History of Chinese Fiction*, Lu Hsün (same man, different romanization) is described as "pioneer and standard-bearer of modern Chinese literature". Of course, one would not expect an author to be decried by those who are promoting his works, and one cannot blink oneself to the fact that the books are produced in China, where consensus is not altogether freely and spontaneously arrived at, yet there is a confidence in these verdicts that suggests it would be merely eccentric to differ. It might as well be admitted from the outset that the confidence is well placed. Embryonic eccentrics among students of modern Chinese literature, beyond the reach of orthodoxy, have generally ended up joining the Lu Xun fan club. Some of the sternest critics of late letters in Communist China have turned their wrath away from him, who probably won more young people over to the Communist cause in the 1930s than any other individual. Significantly, the title of a collection of youthful dissident literature from China itself, published in Hong Kong in 1974, was taken from a Lu Xun poem: "None dares to sing a dirge to move the earth to grief" (Jenner's translation; the line is a modification of one by the Tang poet, Li Shangyin). Only those politically committed to antagonism persistently belittle him.

Essentially, the consensus is about Lu Xun's greatness. Greatness in a writer is attributed on the basis of his oeuvre as a whole. Separately, Lu Xun's scholarship, short stories, essays, poems and prose-poems have not always been given the highest marks by independent critics, and for most of his lifetime, perhaps inevitably, he was considered one writer among many (especially by fellow writers). Admittedly, he was already a grand old man in his last years—though he was only 55 when he died

account. Lu Xun was not that the saint that he has been cracked up to be in China ever since his elevation by Mao Zedong, but he did have in full measure the requisite quality of "backbone" that Mao singled out, the backbone to stand his ground till the very last, not giving an inch to the enemy, while at the same time proving a prickly customer for his own political bosses to deal with (not that Mao emphasized the latter aspect). If it is axiomatic that great men are not

ambitious, or of crusading passion, that is normally hidden under the social crust. The devotion to the written word, the facility in composition, and the depth of feeling that a training in the classical culture encouraged, all contributed to making Lu Xun's work something special when he adopted the medium of the modern colloquial language in 1918. Very few of his generation took up in earnest this "language" of rickshaw men and pedlars. The other big names in modern Chinese literature were almost all impressionist students when the New Literature Movement got off the ground in 1918-19, whereas Lu Xun was already in his late thirties.

Nonetheless, vital though his classical background was, it should not be supposed that he floated the old baby in new bathwater. His short stories, on which his fame as an imaginative writer rests, were in every sense modern. His tutors in the form, new to China, were, most importantly, Russian writers who published around the turn of the twentieth century, conscience-ridden like himself; but the soul of his work was distinctly Chinese. Just as the scholar-officials of old bore responsibility for the moral climate of the empire, so Lu Xun took up his burden of guilt for the barbarity and pusillanimity of his fellow countrymen. Not that this is immediately apparent: more often than the narrator (frequently a first-person narrator) of his stories adopts a mask of insouciance of evasive ineffectuality; but the shadow of the unsaid bulks very large.

Having myself read these stories year after year with succeeding classes of undergraduates, I still do not tire of them—perhaps it is a better recommendation that they go down equally well with the students—and yet they do not generally make much of an impression on those who read them in translation. This may be because existing translations are either so bland that they encourage the reader to race along, or because they try so hard not to be bland that they end up, by being quaintish. Or it may be that some slight acquaintance with the conditions of China in Lu Xun's day is needed to take his point. A third possibility, that sinophiles are all successfully brainwashed, we mention only for the sake of record.

Whatever knowledge is necessary to

The place of Western literature

Zhu Hong

"reactionary outlook". Against this general background, some critical studies were still produced, on Shakespeare, for example, while dedicated scholars like the noted woman professor at the Institute of Foreign Literature, Yang Jiang, managed to blaze a trail in comparative studies on the picaresque novel.

The liberal policies of the "Hundred Flowers" period encouraged independent research in literary studies. Zhou Yang, president of the All-China Federation of Art and Literature, led the way in his speech at a Joint Commemoration of Mark Twain and Cervantes by allowing for more flexibility in treating those figures, who certainly would not fit comfortably into any simplistic model. Apart from a brief cold spell during the "Great Leap Forward", the translation, critical study and teaching of Western literature has continued to thrive. The early 1960s were a particularly productive period (when "demons and monsters" were let loose) to anticipate the philosophy of the "cultural revolution" already looming in the distance), which saw the launching of a World Classics Series in Chinese translation, a "History of European Literature" headed by Professor Yang Jo Han of Beijing University, and more sophisticated discussions on problems of theory, notably the humanist tradition in Western literature, as well as controversy over the ideological role that "bourgeois" literature plays in a socialist society.

Needless to say, the so-called bourgeois literature of the West, which includes almost everything, was

declared to be non-existent during the Cultural Revolution—of Jiang Qing's notorious dictum that literary history "was a blank from the Marcellaise to the Internationale"—or even worse, a tool for restoring capitalism.

The late 1970s, after the removal of the Gang of Four and their pernicious influence, saw a flowering of foreign literature unprecedented in its depth and scope. A veritable harvest of translations (a good deal of popular fiction among it; it is true), a spate of literary journals and magazines; the forming of scholarly societies and holding of symposiums all over the country; successful performances of Shakespeare and modern plays... all contributed to the lively scene. And last but not least, one of the very first volumes of the "Chinese Encyclopedia" (a vast, long-term project) published this year, was that on Foreign Literature.

As far as critical attitudes were concerned, many old labels were challenged and new issues raised. For instance, the prejudice against romanticism, putting it in a lower category than realism, was called into question. With the new critical impetus, much work on Walter Scott, Nathaniel Hawthorne and other romantics was undertaken, while studies of seventeenth-century poetry and other relatively neglected fields also caught up. One of the remarkable features of this "festival of foreign literature" was the breakthrough of the moderns. A symposium on modern and contemporary Western writers, held by a working group within the Institute of Foreign Literature of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,

was a sign of the way things were moving. A number of articles followed, calling for a more balanced view of modern and contemporary literature, especially the modernist phase of it. A multi-volume "Collection of Modernist Literature" in Chinese translation was launched. One of the highlights of this breakthrough was the commemoration of the centenary of the birth of James Joyce (who had hitherto been anathema) sponsored by the Friendship Association in Beijing, while Professor Wang Zuo Liang, Vice-president of Beijing Foreign Language Institute, attended the Joyce Symposium in Ireland.

As a wider public became interested, the issue of how to evaluate modern, and especially modernist literature, turned up in several journals. The pros and cons of the discussion centred on the question whether a mode of writing born out of the decaying capitalist system would be compatible with, and further the spirit of, a literature which purports to be national in content and socialist in ideology. On the other hand, it was questioned whether a certain type of creative imagination, eg the modernist, is necessarily linked to a certain class ideology, eg that of the bourgeoisie. Veteran men of letters of international repute, Hsia Yan and Pa Chin, have recently commented on this issue. Pa Chin, in reply to an inquiry from foreign literature scholars, held that a working group within the Institute of Foreign Literature of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences,

extensively from literary history, calls for a more broad-minded attitude towards foreign literature, which attitude, he points out, is a sign of national self-confidence.

The battle of words has gained momentum as writers, groping for a new technique to grapple with their perceptions of reality, borrow from the moderns, noticeably in the short story. In the works of such well-known writers as Wang Meng and Zung Fu, readers familiar with traditional storytelling are now served slices of stream-of-consciousness, inner monologue, flashbacks, Kafkaesque hallucinations, juxtaposition of incongruities, etc in gifted writing which carries the ring of truth and humanity.

In a word, writers are taking part in the discussion, either by their works, or by theorizing. Which is to say that the discussion has crept out from the bounds of academia and grown into a general literary discussion. Which means in turn that, whichever way you look at it, Western literature is a living influence in China.

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A gift for ceramics

Jessica Rawson

A conference held at Shanghai in November 1982, on technical aspects of Chinese ceramics, might seem a remote and esoteric event, with little to contribute to the non-specialist. That this is not so is due to the fact that Western potters and ceramic industries owe so much to Chinese example.

The Chinese have always had a gift for making pots. Their neolithic bowls, dishes and cups range from the brilliantly painted vessels of the Yangshao culture to pierced stands in eggshell thin black pottery, found at sites along the east coast. Almost all the major technical advances in high fired ceramics were Chinese innovations. It was the Chinese who first embarked on the development of stoneware, with green glazed pots made before 1000 BC; they achieved the first porcelains about AD 1000. From China came the hard white and translucent dishes that graced the tables of rulers from Japan to Venice. The export trade flourished and the kilns grew to meet the demand. Once Chinese pots became known abroad, other ceramic industries followed the Chinese lead. In Europe, no less than in Korea and Japan, potters and even alchemists struggled with the secrets of Chinese porcelain. Their imitations were conscious and direct. In a sense all white dishes, soft and hard paste or merely white earthenware used in an office canteen, derive from Chinese example. During the twentieth century, following Bernard Leach and through him Japanese potters working in a Chinese idiom, Western potters have sought the more subtle effects of the soft luminous glazes, in grey-green, lavender, pale blue or black, obtained by the Song potters (AD 960-1279).

The composition of Chinese porcelain and the chemical nature of these subtle glazes were two of the topics considered at the conference organized by the Shanghai Institute of Ceramics, the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Silicate Society, the conference was truly international, attended by scientists, archaeologists, potters and art-historians from China, Japan and other parts of Asia, from Europe, America and Australia. Sixty-six papers were submitted, of which thirty-six were heard orally and thirty considered at a poster session. A wide range of analytical results, many of them the work of the Institute of Ceramics at Shanghai, was presented. Important contributions were also made by representatives of other institutions in China and by foreign participants. The papers will be published in both Chinese and English early in 1984.

An interesting difference of approach between the Chinese and their visitors became apparent as the conference progressed. The Chinese scientists were motivated by the need to find out how the ancient pots were made so that modern factories might produce exact copies from recipes based on their analyses. The achievements of ancient potters are thus to be harnessed to the advance of China in

the present day. This attitude differs from that of scientists working on ancient ceramics from other parts of the world; pots from the Aegean, for example, are analysed to provide evidence of their date and provenance, and this information contributes to an understanding of the whole area. Chinese ceramics can of course be viewed in the same way. The great quantity of exported Chinese ceramics, found in South-East Asia and Japan, in India, the Middle East and Europe, presents us with questions about the places of origin and about the routes of trade, questions that could be answered by work similar to the studies

conference revealed, the compositions of pots from the two areas differ markedly.

Ceramics in north China were made of a variety of secondary clays, that is off the hills as silt. Many of the pots have grey-coloured bodies, which, in the Song period, were decorated with the green, pale blue or black glazes. Some, however, are white, principally Ding and Xing ware. Ding ware is especially beautiful, with incised or moulded decoration and a creamy white colour. Westerners have often had difficulty in deciding whether to call Ding a porcelain or a stone-

coloured Western understanding of porcelain, they have also formed the basis of Western attempts to imitate Chinese porcelain, resulting in methods that depended upon both a clay and a stone.

However, Père d'Entrecolles was recording the manufacture of Chinese porcelain at a relatively late stage in its development. Scientific analyses have now shown that Song porcelains from Jingdezhen were probably made of a single material, kaolin being added only from the fourteenth century to provide the strength required for large dishes. It had been possible to use the stone by itself because Chinese

feldspar which when well ground, without the addition of anything, good porcelain bodies can be thrown on the wheel. References to Russian and published in 1959, and to Nigel Wood's work are also missing. Failure to mention Nigel Wood's contribution is particularly surprising, in *Oriental Glazes* (1978) Wood reviewed the work of Vogt and Sundius, bringing out the significance of the early use of the stone of Sèvres. At the same time he correctly described the material used for glazes. Here again the knowledge in the West coloured Western understanding, and as a result Chinese glazes have often been termed 'stone glazes'. However, as we have seen, feldspar is not a major constituent of Chinese glazes and stones. The material in Chinese glazes was slaked lime mixed in many cases with ash. In the book, Wood sets out recipes for reproducing these glazes.

However, the subtle colours of glazes, particularly those of the Song period, depended on more than the materials. Several papers at the Shanghai conference discussed the microstructure of the glazes, explaining the many tints within glazes in terms of minute variations in the crystalline structure. This variation reflects uneven mixing and impurities, and also results from critical control of the firing temperature, the length of the firing and the atmosphere of the kiln. While the chemistry was discussed at some length kiln structure and kiln setting was less fully considered. The papers on this field were fascinating, hinting at new areas of research.

Two major kiln types were widely distributed: a kiln with a round structure, the *manjiao*, was used in the north, while a climbing, or dragon kiln, was more common in the south. While these two main areas, similar pottery was made at a number of places. The green wares were made at several localities in north China, with porcelains with a clear glaze tinged with blue, *qingbai*, were produced at many southern kilns, making up what the Chinese scholar, Feng Xianming, has described as families of wares. The technology of all these ceramics is complex, both in their composition and in their firing, these families imply close communication between kilns. The motives for setting up new kilns were of course commercial. When the demand for a certain type of pot could not be met by one kiln or cluster of kilns, a new series of kilns sprang up, adding the new kilns must have gained some of their skills from existing enterprises. A comparison of kiln shapes, and above all kiln furniture, such as saggers, stands and supports, may in the future help to illustrate the way in which techniques were handed on from one kiln to the next.

A study of the technology of Chinese ceramics thus brings forward new historical questions, including the issues of the finance and marketing of the kilns. In addition to the pottery, a huge labour force must have been required by the porcelain industry to mine and grind the stone. We have also to learn how the properties of porcelain stone were first discovered. For example, 'the stone first retrieved and ground as an abrasive for use in carving jade' (p. 15) was worked in the area of the porcelain triangle from the neolithic period; over the centuries experiments were probably made with a large number of hard stones or earths in pursuit of suitable abrasives to grind and polish jade; a material so tough that even when metals became available it could not be cut with bronze or steel. We have to search along these lines for a new understanding of the sources of porcelain technology; for porcelain can no longer be regarded as the product of a continuous development from earthenware to stoneware and from stoneware to porcelain. Differences in the composition of all three materials define industries based on different techniques. The answers provided by the discussions at Shanghai have sharpened the questions that we must now ask about the structure of the ceramic industries of China.



A Cizhou glazed stoneware pillow modelled as a reclining boy to be sold at Christie's, in their sale of Fine Chinese Ceramics, Jades and Works of Art, on July 5.

undertaken on classical pottery. A third approach is found among Western potters. They, like the Chinese, wish to reproduce the effects of ancient Chinese pots, but they work not in factories but individually in their studios and workshops. The Chinese at the conference clearly found accounts of this Western method of working challenging.

The questions to which the majority of the papers were addressed can be divided under three main headings: the composition of Chinese porcelains, the nature of Chinese glazes, particularly those of the Song period, and the structure of the kilns. Before the composition of porcelain can be described, the range of material to which the term is applied has to be defined. In the West, we generally use the word porcelain to describe pots made of a white clay, with the addition of ground stone, that are translucent when fired and have a ringing tone when struck. The Chinese use a much broader term, *ci*, to include all the high fired wares that in the West are subdivided into stonewares and porcelains. Neither the Western usage term is entirely appropriate. White pots to which the description porcelain may be applied were made in both north and south China, but, as the

ware. This uncertainty reflects the complexity of the material. The analyses of Ding announced at Shanghai have documented its unusual composition - it consists of a fine addition of dolomite - and the very high temperature to which it was fired. On account of the high temperature, and the translucency achieved, in many if not all instances, Ding can perhaps be regarded as a porcelain. However, it does not contain any porcelain stone, a primary rather than a secondary material, which is an important component of true porcelains. Chinese porcelain stone is an igneous rock related to Cornish stone. This porcelain stone was the major ingredient in most southern ceramics, including white wares both from the kilns at Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province and from the kilns in Fujian, and also of the green celadons from Longquan, province. These three areas make up what has aptly been named the porcelain triangle.

Not only did the conference bring out the differences between the raw China, it also confirmed a view that had already been expressed by some Chinese authorities, and by Sir John Addis in the *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society*, volume 45 (1980-81), with reference to their work, that early southern porcelains seem to have been made exclusively of a primary rock, porcelain stone, without the admixture of the related white clay which we know by its Chinese name, kaolin. These results fundamentally change the Western perception of the character of Chinese porcelain. Hitherto, it has generally been accepted in the West that all true porcelain consist of a mixture of a white clay and a ground stone. As far as the materials used in China are concerned, the source of this view was the description of the porcelain factories at Jingdezhen set out by the Jesuit missionary, Père d'Entrecolles, in two letters which he sent from China in 1712 and 1722. These letters are an invaluable source of information about the organization of the workshops and kilns and the preparation of the raw materials. Père d'Entrecolles explained that two materials were used: 'petunse' (Chinese: *bai dunzi*) a rock quarried, crushed and washed, and then formed into small bricks; and 'kaolin' (Chinese: *gao ling*), a white clay mined in a slightly different area, with which the petunse was mixed. Not only have these descriptions

BIBLIOGRAPHY

From printer to reader

Giles Barber

KENNETH E. CARPENTER (Editor)

Books and Society in History: Papers of the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Preconference 24-28 June, 1980, Boston, Massachusetts 254pp. New York: Bowker. \$29.95. 0 8352 1675 6

In 1958 the well-known Renaissance historian Lucien Febvre and a young archivist librarian called Henri-Jean Martin published *L'Apparition du livre*, a work which attempted to link bibliographical history with the history of ideas. During the next decades Martin, later Librarian at Lyons and influential through his teaching position with the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes at Paris, continued to propagate this approach, dubbed that of the 'Annales school' after the French historical periodical of that name, and took the story forward with a brilliant history and analysis of the seventeenth century entitled *Le Livre, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII^e siècle* (1969). In England the bibliographical world was more given to analytic and textual bibliography and preferred the literary to the history of ideas or sociological line until the recent advent of *Publishing History*

and similar works. It even took eighteen years for Febvre and Martin's seminal book to be translated into English. In America, however, certain scholars of French took up the Martin line, albeit without the statistical base and with a tendency to prefer clandestine and sociological subjects. The year 1979 thus saw the publication of Elizabeth Eisenstein's *The Printing Press as the Agent of Change*, and, more importantly, Robert Darnton's *The Business of Enlightenment: a publishing history of the Encyclopédie*, a study in fact of the later history of the work but one which, from its title on, links the whole history of printing and publication with the movement of the general European book trade had led to meetings in Oxford and particularly at Wolfenbüttel under the aegis of Paul Raabe, the proceedings of the 1977 conference being published (in 1981) under the title *The Book and the book trade in eighteenth century Europe*.

The Association of College and Research Libraries felt that these various streams of scholarship on the book should be brought together and created the opportunity at the Preconference meeting of their Rare Books and Manuscripts section, held in Boston in June 1980. *Books and Society in History* represents the revised and slightly updated papers given on that occasion with only the (unacknowledged) substitution for

Professor Darnton's postprandial address of his more important paper 'What is the history of books?', previously printed in *Daedalus*. In this he proposes a general model for analysing the way books come into being and spread through society, which he then exemplifies with the study of a book published by the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel (from the fantastically rich archive of which much of his work is drawn) and sold in the south of France by a local bookseller. This 'communications circuit' takes in the whole range of trades concerned with the book, one of the great virtues of this approach; but, here at least, it relies perhaps too much on the individual picturesque case and too little on a wider knowledge of the trade. Apart from this methodological paper and one by Paul Raabe, 'Library history and the history of books' (more fully printed in *Essays in the history of the book*, in the honor of James Edward Walsh), the other papers cover a wide range of interesting subjects in authoritative style. Elizabeth Eisenstein studies the fifteenth-century book trade, Henri-Jean Martin publishing conditions in Ancien Régime France, Katharine Pantzer the printing of the English statutes; censorship in France and England is the concern of Raymond Birt and John Feather, while Bernard Fabian gives an excellent survey of English-language publishing in eighteenth-century Germany. Frédéric Barbier analyses nineteenth-

century French publishing output, and Jim Barnes considers certain relationships between economic fluctuation and publishing in the modern British and American book trades. Rich fare in all, especially since the essays are introduced by Thomas Tanselle. Analytical bibliography, though brilliantly exemplified in the volume, is perhaps under-represented in it and Tanselle rightly stresses the importance of its place in the broad field of 'book history' studies. Literacy studies are clearly relevant but quite as central are those of the state of the text and of the typographical methods of its presentation. As Professor Tanselle puts it: 'Analytical bibliography is history, not literary criticism: it marshals the primary artifacts into usable form.' The physical evidence in the book can be interpreted, on occasion, from outside sources but it remains the core fact. The dialogue between these approaches has much to offer both sides and it is good to know that a further meeting held at Wolfenbüttel in May of this year attempted to identify areas in which both approaches might come together in suitable international comparisons. *Books and Society in History* is interesting, readable and an excellent introduction to some of the latest moves in interpreting the role of the book and of print in Western society.

Spreading the word

Nicolas Barker

ELIZABETH L. EISENSTEIN

The Printing Press as the Agent of Change 794pp. Cambridge University Press. Paperback, £12.50. 0 521 29955 1

Elizabeth L. Eisenstein's long study of the impact of the invention of the printing press on fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe was first published in 1979 (during the absence of the TLS). It was the culmination of a series of articles, whose burden was that printing was the cause of many of the great changes in human ideas in the period, not (as generally supposed) the effect. It is a long book, based on an enormous amount of historical reading. Its success has been remarkable: it has been widely and extensively reviewed all over the world, and its appearance now in paperback is evidence of the impact it has had on historians and the teaching of history.

The book falls into four parts: a discussion of the technical change in the transmission of facts and ideas caused by the ability to produce at one time hundreds of uniform copies of a piece of writing; and extended reviews of that change as influence, in succession, on the revival of the past (the Renaissance), Scripture and the Church (the Reformation) and the growth of modern science. Each case is treated separately, not without repetition, so that they can almost be read independently. Within each section, the argument is diffuse and elaborate (hence the length of the

book); this has been imposed on the author by the need to meet the various contrary theories she quotes, and to substitute a simpler view based on the all-pervasive influence of the press.

The impact of this view has not been uniform. Professional historians, especially those sociologically inclined, have generally welcomed it (it has evoked substantial interest in France, predictably enough). Specialists have, inevitably, found fault in details. Notably, bibliographers have resented a basic misunderstanding of the history of printing itself: the repeated and jarring use of the phrase 'print shop' suggests a confusion of the very different *métiers* of printing and publishing. Professor Eisenstein has anticipated this:

Studies dealing with the history of printing are isolated and artificially sealed off from the rest of historical literature. In theory, these studies center on a topic that impinges on many other fields. In fact, they are seldom consulted by scholars who work in any other field, perhaps because their relevance to other fields is still not clear.

In fact, this isolation is not so absolute as Professor Eisenstein suggests. Many literary scholars have been aware of the need to understand the interrelation of printing and publishing with a writer's work, even if they have been reluctant to stray beyond the text to pursue the *fama* that the press brought. Historians, too, are now realizing its importance (G. E. Elton's work on Thomas Cromwell and the English Reformation is a notable example). It is worth noting, also, that the press did not, for all its revolutionary consequences, extinguish scribal transmission for a long

time; it remained a genuine alternative, for certain purposes, until the nineteenth century and the Industrial Revolution.

What few critics seem to have realized is that *The Printing Press as the Agent of Change* is not primarily a book about history but about the way history is written. Professor Eisenstein has been biased for neglecting the sources: it is not the facts but their interpretation, the intellectual edifices that have been built on them, which have so long engaged her. The misconceptions about the impact of the press are not hers, but those of the many authors of the last hundred years whom she has read and digested. The primary purpose of the book is to explode or at least disturb the assumptions that have been too often carried over without question from generation to generation, and in this it has abundantly succeeded.

If bibliographers can be persuaded to raise their horizons from the physical evidence of books to consider their impact on society, if historians can forget their assumptions and ponder the realities of the new-found diffusion of printed matter, then Professor Eisenstein will have succeeded in her purpose of balancing the account of the printing revolution. That it was a revolution, a revolution of ideas beyond dispute, in the words of Thomas Jefferson, 'applied cited here: "The lost cannot be recovered; but let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use, in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident."

Correction: American book-collecting journals

In the article 'American book-collecting journals' by Katharine Kyes Leab and Daniel J. Leab, published in the TLS, June 10, a section of the text was unfortunately omitted through an error in transmission. The sentence incorrectly stating that 'PBSA is the successor to the well-regarded *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*' should have read as follows:

PBSA aims 'to review any serious bibliography published in America and as many published abroad as possible'. A recent issue included a detailed study of the Bodley Head and the Daniel Press and bibliographical notes on subjects ranging from 'A Periodical Venture of the Morrisons of Perth' to

'An Examination of the Drafts of Hemingway's Chapter "Nick" set against the wall of the church . . .', as well as reviews from both the academic world and the domain of the collector. A most useful publication, PBSA is available only through membership of the Bibliographical Society of America.

The American Printing History Association publishes *Printing History* for its members twice yearly, edited by Susan Otis Thompson, and it is a beautifully designed and illustrated journal. A recent issue included a serious assessment of the last years of the Golden Cockerel Press on subjects ranging from 'A Periodical Venture of the Morrisons of Perth' to

Pantzer's 'Ephemera in the STC Revision: A Housekeeper's View', a version of her paper at the 1980 APHA annual conference. More specialized publications, smaller in scope, also benefit the book collector. The occasional *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* is the successor to the well-regarded *Bulletin of the New York Public Library*.

Rudolf Hirsch has edited *A Catalogue of the Manuscript and Archives of the Library of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* (259pp. University of Pennsylvania Press, available in the UK from International Book Distributors, \$30. 0 8122 7817 8).

Early slugs

The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, Volume 76, Number 4 (1982) is occupied almost entirely with a single essay by Paul Needham of the Pierpont Morgan Library, on Gutenberg and the Mainz press responsible for the *Catholicon* usually dated to 1460. For some time it has been realized that this book presents an enigma. Copies of the *Catholicon* survive printed on three major different paper stocks, but the discovery a few years ago that two of these stocks were otherwise known only from the end of the 1460s and the early 1470s has led to much speculation and blurring of evidence, though not, hitherto, to a solution. Needham has reduced the conflicting evidence to its one logical implication: that there were three impressions of the *Catholicon*, printed on three separate occasions between 1460 and the early 1470s.

Yet if this is so, as seems clearly the case, then there is an obvious objection that to keep so much type standing (the *Catholicon* contains 373 leaves printed in double columns) for so long would have been prohibitively expensive. Needham offers an ingenious and convincing solution to this second problem, and one of fundamental importance in the technical history of printing. In a careful examination of surviving copies he demonstrates that before the type of the 1460 impression was distributed, casts were taken off it, two lines at a time, and put aside against the time when a new impression of this provenly popular text was again called for. The second and third impressions were thus printed from slugs not unlike those from a modern Linotype, and not from movable type.

The printer of the *Catholicon* himself remains, still, anonymous. The book has been traditionally associated with Gutenberg, but there is still no direct evidence to prove the association, conclusively. Mr Needham's thesis, however, greatly strengthens the case. Apart from his declared preference for casting slugs from type, to the inventor of movable type himself, the evidence of the paper and the little we know of Gutenberg's estate after his death in 1468 both fit neatly with the theory. It is known that his printing materials passed into the hands of one of the most prominent residents of Mainz, Konrad Henry, who seems to have had a strong financial interest in the *Catholicon*, and thus the reprint, printed by Peter Schoeffer, were a logical (and long-premeditated) way to recoup an investment.

D. J. McKitterick

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A technician at his tasks

Ugo Varnai

CARLO EMILIO GADDA

Il tempo e le opere:
Saggi, note e divagazioni
281pp. Milan: Adelphi, L. 9,500.

The most remarkable part of Gadda's splendid oeuvre is undoubtedly his fiction, but the rest is far from unremarkable. Many of his essays could be said to be minor works, but then the concepts of major and minor are not always applicable to Gadda. Also, there is a whole area in which it is not easy to draw the line between his fiction and non-fiction, the two seem to overlap and often to coexist in the same text.

In a short essay of 1968, near the end of his creative life, Gadda complained that most of his writings had been simply tasks imposed upon him "by suggestion, prayer or injunction... and, in a number of cases, with the sly intention to harm me". The latter point is of course wholly imaginary, one of Gadda's typical foibles, but a sense of constriction, or reluctance, is often perceptible beneath the surface of the items collected in *Il tempo e le opere*. After the delightful *Le bizze del capitano in congedo*, an anthology of Gadda's uncollected "fictional" work, Adelphi now provide a companion volume of twenty-six "non-narrative" pieces (or, as we read in the subtitle, "Essays, notes and digressions") to supplement the authorial collection *I viaggi di morte* of 1953.

There has always been something peculiar about the way Gadda's work came to be published and collected, and this seems now to continue posthumously with volumes which can

claim almost the status of originals although they contain no previously unpublished material. Of course the importance of Gadda is such that practically every line he ever wrote is of interest, and every reprint can be useful: but until there is a definitive critical edition of his minor writings each new partial collection cannot fail to complicate the picture.

The new Adelphi volume is attractive and welcome, but naturally there is an element of the arbitrary about this particular selection. Apart from an old contribution to *Solaria* which goes back to the mid-1920s, the essays cover the period 1934-68 and about two thirds belong to the 1950s and 60s. The subjects include individual writers, notably Manzoni, Belli, D'Annunzio, Montale and Palazzeschi; painters as far apart as Crivelli and de Chirico; topics in linguistics, including the uses of Latin, the rôle of dialects, and the nature of literary Italian, the so-called "Monolingualism"; and questions relating to modern society and technology. Nearly all are purely occasional pieces, reviews of books or replies to questionnaires: a series of "tasks" which, in themselves, cannot have been congenial to Gadda but which he generally performed with a heroic determination to be polite, sensible, sound - even ordinary.

A special zest is in evidence when he feels able to be openly polemical, as in his defence of Manzoni against Moravia's slightly absurd critique, an attempt "to indict a Milanese gentleman born in 1785 and active between 1815 and 1840, for not writing his novel in terms of the ideas and customs of 1959", or when he ridicules the critics of Tom Antongini's some-

what low-brow *Life of D'Annunzio*. The biographer had been accused of having publicized too openly certain non-heroic features of the poet's life. Gadda speaks for the defence:

If, from America, they paid him thousands for an article patched up from a previous one, why should we say he lived in poverty? ... He enjoyed giving away jewels worth hundreds of thousands and cigarette-cases adorned with lapislazuli: what point would there be in claiming, instead, that he drilled railway tunnels under the Alps?

The essays on individual authors, while perfectly plausible as literary profiles, are not particularly striking or novel: but they are of course full of highly memorable, sharp notations, such as the definition of Montale's language as "cultivated and fraternal" or the picture of the seemingly angelic Palazzeschi who writes wisely and politely "with a squirt of perfidiousness, like a squirt of Fernet in a glass of Cinzano".

Something similar applies to Gadda's art criticism: it is more impressive for its whimsical competence and assurance in analysing general critical terms. The remarkable Gadda called "Il controllo dei Crivelli" ("Crivelli's Cucumber": it seems that Gadda was worried about this title, on account of certain improper associations) contains some telling points, about the almost Leopardi-like vividness of the painter's flowers and fruit, particularly the emblematic cucumber itself, "a fixed idea of the artist's, charged with a *zucchetsca* (pumpkin-like) significance". In its vigorous attempts to define images with words, the visual with the verbal,

Gadda's prose is significantly related to Roberto Longhi's, that extraordinary instrument of Italian art criticism in this century.

In the section concerned with language it is interesting to compare the study of the literary significance of dialects with the account of the Super-language, Latin: Gadda was obviously sensitive to the antithetical, yet somehow complementary, nature of these two realities underlying Italian but the main impact of these linguistic essays depends on certain crucial notions which come through with great force, notably the conception of "the forced plurilingualism of the living" with the implicit, simple and powerful claim that to be alive is to be plurilingual.

As for the concluding section, on technical and sociological themes, we would expect the open letter of 1953 (to Sinigaglia) discussing the so-called "age of the machines" to contain the basic outlook of Gadda the *ingegnere*: "I have projected and designed many machines", he states at the beginning. "I have tested them and started them off, I have visited about two thousand construction sites, plants, factories, stations, workshops, in Italy, in South America, in Europe." But what we get in effect are not the views of a mechanically minded "technical" man, rather the thoughts of a literary humanist about machines: and it is surprising how dated, even for 1953, Gadda's conception of a machine turns out to be. Similarly old-fashioned is the essay on motor-cars (1963), where we learn, however, how Gadda reacted when Mussolini created the word *autista* to replace the foreign *chauffeur*: "On the spur of the moment I was so furious I took to my bed... though

today I say and write outside my greatest ease".

The limitations of Gadda's work of current affairs can be seen in most obvious in his attitude to Southern questions. He did not exploit "the South", as a suggestion that the First World War was largely paid for with the blood of the Southern peasantry made conceivable sense to say the least. What were these expatriate fellow Milanese were exploiting? what they were doing was to accommodate vast numbers of immigrants. ... Here he certainly every reason to reject any rhetorical claims about exile and separatism, but his own views question was embarrassing now.

In all these essays there is a genius, with its accompanying inventiveness, the moodiness, the quaint erudition - and the raw power. Perhaps the most accurate account of how Italian communities were growing in these phases of the economic miracle. We feel close to the deep roots of Gadda's art, his need to exploit himself the causes of things, to the reality which underlies the reality. ... What "is behind" his expansion of a modern city, the growth of its population and its new world. How does the process start, what it consist of, where does it lead? Gadda's answers are not statistical, they are poetic, precise, strange, a compassionate is his understanding the Italian society of the day he yesterday.

LITERATURE

Zealously meditating

Lachlan Mackinnon

M. THOMAS HESTER

Kinde Pitty and Brave Scorn: John Donne's 'Satyres'
178pp. Duke University Press.
\$29.75.
0 8223 0480 5

WILLIAM ZUNDER

The Poetry of John Donne: Literature and Culture in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Period
121pp. Harvester/Barnes and Noble.
\$15.95.
0 7108 04571

The two books under review aim to see Donne in his literary and historical context. M. Thomas Hester offers a close reading of the *Satires*. "In accordance with the specific calls for reformation in a time of apocalyptic fervor and alarm, the *Satires* portray a speaker whose meditative explanation of what 'decadent demands' of him conform to traditional and contemporary descriptions of the zeal of the Prophets." Much of this book, particularly when dealing with the fifth *Satire*, is concerned with setting Donne in a Christian tradition and with showing how his Biblical allusions relate the poems to conventional exhortation. However, "How Donne accommodates the techniques of Roman satire to these prescriptions in each of the poems is the major concern of this study of the persona, imagery, and design" of what the author argues is a carefully elaborated sequence.

The sequence Hester shows us develops from portrayal of the speaker's moral character and aesthetic and spiritual consciousness to his efforts to put his ideas into practice. He makes a strong case for such ordering on the poet's part, and is extremely informative about the background. Particularly interesting is an appendix on "Careless Phrygians", who Hester argues is not an atheist but "an atheistic Separatist, most likely a Barrowist", a figure whose confident denial of the efficacy of any church is as far from wide doubt as any sectarian view. Hester's wide reading contributes to our understanding of detail.

However, he suffers from scholar's myopia (the argument is soon obscured). In the first *Satire*, Hester sees the speaker as engaged in an "anxious search for a satiric stance that will satisfy both his private and public duties as Christian scholar". Although the end of the poem reveals the speaker to be possibly "foolish or naive", his charity is the expression of "a relationship correspondent to his own consorting with God"; the speaker acts as priest and faithful shepherd, showing a fidelity which the pop does

not apparently merit. In this he is an exemplar of Christian virtue. The stability of the study is opposed to the dazzle of the town, which "enforces the scholar's praise of the eternal and condemnation of the temporal". The scholar's movement into town is a "fortunate fall", through which we can see his "education or initiation into the necessity of satire".

This is to miss the human point of the poem, which is far funnier than Hester's po-faced intentness suggests. The scholar and the pop need each other. The scholar's willing acceptance of a relationship he knows can only lead to humiliation is the portrait of any bookish young man half in love with his gilded peers. When at the end the pop is driven out of his mistress's house by her other followers, the scholar says that he "constantly a while must keep his bed". This is a sour and purely verbal triumph. The poem subverts its apparent seriousness by making the scholar transparent in his satire: the world he affects to loathe he secretly adores, and it is the pop who exhibits comic resilience (he will only be in bed "a while"). This human comedy is what makes the poem live.

William Zunder's *The Poetry of John Donne* is spectacularly inert. It is also very short and very expensive, but rich essay-readers will be disappointed. It is meant primarily for students, and sets out to read Donne's poetry "in itself and in context". An important element, it is comparison with other writers of the time, in particular with Shakespeare.

Comparison with Shakespeare means that, in "The Canonization", "Like Bassanio in the *Merchant of Venice*", the speaker is representative of a similar in *Troilus and Cressida*. ... The poem actually reminds one of *King Lear*. There turns out to be "a similarity between the structure of the love poems and the structure of *Twelfth Night*". The Epithalamions and a "handful" of poems "correspond to the place of Viola in the play".

Zunder has nothing to tell us about Shakespeare, and almost nothing about Donne. His Donne is a Leavisite before his time, serious and moral but increasingly unable to accept traditional values and the resolving significance of personal experience. Donne's spiky personality is boiled away by the suggestion that proprieties are the work of a personae, just as too often Zunder attributes his views to the "one" of Leavis. A critic whose style shuns personality should have avoided such a personal poet, and a reader who does not know that "the sixteenth century in England... was, for certain people, a period of increasing prosperity" should avoid a book which expects him to have Donne's biography at his fingertips.

Wholeheartedly following

Alan Rudrum

JONATHAN F. S. POST

Henry Vaughan: The Unfolding Vision
243pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £18.45.
0 691 06527 6

R. V. YOUNG

Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age
204pp. Yale University Press. £15.50.
0 300 02766 4

Jonathan Post sees the Vaughan of *Sillex Scintillans* as having deliberately ceased to imitate a variety of earlier poets in order to become a wholehearted disciple of that "blessed man, Mr. George Herbert". He usefully sets that decision in the context of a Renaissance discussion as to "whether one or many are to be followed" and of Jonson's vote in favour of one rather than many. Post's own decision, to proceed on the basis of the centrality of Herbert's influence, is a response to what he sees as the two major schools of Vaughan criticism, made up of those who affirm and those who deny the importance of religious conversion. There is no doubt that Post's alternative strategy, of bypassing the issue in favour of a consideration of strictly literary influence, has the advantage of putting him on firm ground: the fact of Herbert's influence is undeniable, even if the range of its implications remains to be explored.

Another undeniable fact is that, whatever premonitory tensions in religion and politics may have been present to Herbert's consciousness, by Vaughan's time the context for an Anglican religious poet had changed utterly. Apart from temperamental dissimilarities, a quite different kind of imaginative effort was called for. Post recognizes the importance of this changed context and writes suggestively of the way in which the *Book of Common Prayer* underlies *The Mount of Olives*, as Vaughan recreates "the structure and experience of Holy Communion"; and of how its "sacramental order" is paralleled in *Sillex Scintillans*. He adds to earlier critics' perceptions of the ways in which Vaughan responded to changed circumstances but does not entirely avoid the danger inherent in this approach, of over-simplifying Vaughan's relationship to his outlawed Church and its doctrines. In the introduction Post describes Vaughan as a "self-styled pastor-poet writing on behalf of a Church which had been driven underground" and as having "incorporated in his work the figure of a regenerated poet who was also an elected apologist of the Church of England". Here "self-styled" and

"elected" suggest a Vaughan with a strong sense of public purpose and of defined constituency, and ignore the privacy of his communings with God, with the natural world, and with his dead. Post does in fact largely ignore some important elements in Vaughan which are not readily assimilated to the influence of Herbert or to the main preoccupations of contemporary Anglican doctrine, for example his idiosyncratic use of the Bible and his dwelling on the themes of hiddenness, potentiality, transformation, the drive towards unity, and the recovery of the Paradise hidden within the natural world: the themes, that is, of "hermetic" Christianity, demonstrably there in Vaughan, which remind us that he was the brother of Thomas Vaughan and a reader of Paracelsus and Agrippa, and which, like the influence of Herbert, have a bearing on his discovery of his own poetic voice.

If Post's approach is limited, he has still written the best extended critical study for some years. He brings a fresh eye to every phase of Vaughan's work and, though they are not his main concern, is especially good on the early poems. He makes real sense of the disparate elements of *Oliver's Island*, showing convincingly how its discordances comment on those of the times, seeing its arrangement as strengthening the view that it too is a meaningfully ordered work, its second part evidencing a deepening preoccupation with the apocalyptic, with "The Night" pulling together "the various apocalyptic strains in Part II to form a supreme meditation on a moment of change, historically perceived and individually experienced". But here one is reminded of one of the oddities of criticism, namely that there are some critics who are illuminating on works that they nevertheless misread in detail. I cannot accept Post's reading of the final stanza of "The Night", since to refer the phrase "late and dusky" to the approaching end of time rather than to

the time of day ignores Vaughan's point: the comparison of human spiritual vision, which can see only "A deep, but dazzling darkness" in God, with our limited eyesight, which fails us at night. Post's reading would swamp the comparison if it were admitted. On page 146 a failure to give syntax and biblical source their due weight results in Post proposing two impossible readings of lines 3 and 4 of "Ascension-day": he does not see that the (unexpressed) direct object of "lifts" is the "all men" of John xii 32. It is with gratitude for the firmness, clarity and steady intelligence with which most of this book's argument is conducted.

R. V. Young, in *Richard Crashaw and the Spanish Golden Age*, argues that Crashaw studies to date have concentrated disproportionately on his debt to Italian and neo-Latin poetry, thus focusing attention on his more extravagant works, for example "The Weeper", at the expense of the Teresa poems and the various hymns on ecclesiastical feasts; that Crashaw's poetry is essentially public, ritualistic and impersonal: "in spirit if not in fact, a part of the liturgy"; and that the "foreign" quality of Crashaw makes it necessary for us to find his literary homeland. Young's detailed argument for locating that homeland in the Spain of the Golden Age is well researched, well written and on the whole well argued, though here too there is room for local disagreements. One is not quite persuaded that "in mid-century England religious exaltation was a wholly exotic growth - the exclusive ending of Donne's Holy Sonnet Vaughan"; and surely the point about the ending of Donne's "Christ, thy spouse", which Young puts up (as a comparable horror) against Crashaw's "walking baths" and "portable and compendious oceans" is not that it is in bad taste, but that it takes a quite central Christian symbol and sets it in a new and arresting light, to shock and then to elicit assent.

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A novelist and his brood

Filippo Donini

NATALIA GINZBURG

La famiglia Manzoni
347pp. Turin: Einaudi. L.18,000.

Neither Manzoni's life nor that of any member of his family contained many elements that may strictly be called "romantic". This most homebound of all Italian poets did nothing adventurous; with the exception of a few visits to Paris, Turin, Genoa, Pisa and Florence, his life was spent entirely in Milan and Brusuglio, his country-house, and can be accurately described as uneventful. The great historical upheavals of his times affected him deeply (he fainted on hearing of the death of Napoleon); he wrote the most moving lines of any poet about the Risorgimento but neither wars nor revolutions caused any serious loss or trouble either to him personally or to his family or his property. The one mystery in his life concerned the identity of his father, but it is doubtful whether he himself ever suspected he might not be the legitimate son of Count Pietro Manzoni.

Yet Natalia Ginzburg's book on the Manzoni family is more fascinating and gripping than any work of fiction. No doubt the fact that every single story in the book is true has something to do with it, but that is so with all the best biographies. So how is it that in this case one can know better before opening the book than after? The answer lies in the fact that Manzoni's first wife would die young, that he would remarry but only to become a widower again, and that of his nine children, only two would survive him?

There is only one explanation, and it lies in the book's authorship. Italian biographies have only rarely reached the level of works of art, but *La famiglia Manzoni* is one which does. Natalia Ginzburg is at her best when writing about families, either relating her personal memories (*Lessico familiare*) or in her stories (*La voce della luna*, *Caro Michele*). The Manzoni family obviously attracted her, for she would attract anyone with her lucid lucubrations, but it is also interesting to feel that she is full of remarkable characters who are

rewarding objects of study as individuals, and who, as a group, form an outstanding collection of different, sometimes conflicting, personalities.

Manzoni's mother, Giulia Beccaria, was the daughter of one of the leaders of the Italian Enlightenment, the penal reformer Cesare Beccaria, whose book on *Crimes and Punishments* brought about the suppression of the death penalty in most European countries. She married, reluctantly, Count Manzoni, and became the lover of Giovanni Verri, who possibly fathered Alessandro, and of another pillar of the Milanese Establishment, Carlo Imbonati, with whom she spent several years in Paris. She was not exactly a loose woman, but neither was she a paragon of morality. She followed her son in his conversion to a strict Roman Catholicism and submitted, reluctantly, to the austere rules dictated by her confessor. For her obedient son she chose a bride quite different from her self: Enrichetta Blondel, a girl who was all Calvinism and moral scruples. Enrichetta had a terrible time when, two years after her marriage, she abandoned Calvinism and went over to Rome, incurring the bitter disapproval of her parents. A Roman Catholic she became, but with a Calvinistic seriousness of purpose and abhorrence of compromise which, if it brought her peace of mind, caused the ruin of her body: in twenty-five years of marriage she gave birth to nine children (not counting miscarriages) and died at the age of forty-two.

Manzoni's second wife, Teresa Stampa, was a different character again, religious also but in the carefree Italian manner; devoted to her husband but more concerned with the preservation of her own health and well-being of Stefano; her son by her previous husband, then with anything else. Manzoni was very fond of Stefano, and perhaps understood him better than any of his own children. For he may have loved his children but he certainly didn't understand them; his daughter, Giulietta, for instance, who was deeply in love with another man, when her father urged her to marry Massimo d'Azeglio, a writer and politician who took her without loving her ("Giulietta is beautiful, but she is the daughter of Manzoni" was his verdict), and his marriage was

disastrous: she died at twenty-six, broken-hearted at her husband's infidelity. Pietro, the eldest son, was good at taking his father for walks and offering him his shoulder as a support, and at revising his proofs and looking after his property, but when Pietro married a dancer from La Scala he kept the marriage secret. Another son, Enrico, was disgraced when, after a promising start in business, he went bankrupt, and caused his father much financial embarrassment. Filippo was the blackest sheep of all, however: imprisoned by the Austrians first for political reasons and then for debt, he was supplied with food and clothing by friends, but not by his father. He too made a secret marriage, and died in poverty and desperation at forty-two.

Noise of Manzoni's daughters went to the bad like Enrico or Filippo, but only Vittoria reached old age and enjoyed a moderately happy life with her husband, G. B. Giorgini. The others all died young. Clara, as an infant, Sofia at twenty-eight, Cristina and Matilde at twenty-six. Poor Matilde was the most unlucky of all, enduring long illness. As the climate of Turin was supposed to be better for her than that of Lombardy she spent her last years with her sister Vittoria and the Giorgini family, in Florence. Sofia and Montignoso. Nothing could be more touching than the letters she wrote to her father, imploring him to come and see her, or at least to write. His answers were her greatest comfort: "You have such a way of saying things that you reach the very bottom of my heart." Yet her adored father wrote less and less often and never went to see her. Apparently, Manzoni was much more affected by the illnesses and deaths of his literary friends, Tommaso Grossi, and his religious mentor, Antonio Rosmini.

Letters, indeed, are the substance of this book: the letters written by the numerous members of the Manzoni family to one another, as well as letters to and from friends. Long excerpts of authenticity to each episode of the story Mrs Ginzburg has to tell. Her own has joined these fragments together as a literary composition of a family, but it is not a family story that is being told. The book is divided into eight chapters, each



The Manzoni family in 1823, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

bearing the name of one of the eight members of the Manzoni family who follow one another chronologically as the protagonists. Giulia, Manzoni's first wife, followed by Enrichetta, his first wife. Then come Giulietta, Teresa (his second wife), Vittoria, Matilde and Stefano, the stepson who survived them all; he died in 1907, at the age of eighty-eight. The only outsider is the French writer Claude Fauriel, who is inserted between Enrichetta and Giulietta; his inclusion is more than justified by the warm friendship that both Giulia and Manzoni professed for his god-daughter, Giulietta. His own letters, and those of Manzoni and Giulietta to him, are among the best in the book.

Although Giulia, Enrichetta and all the rest are brought in succession to the fore, and given temporary precedence, from beginning to end it is, of course, Manzoni himself. We follow him from his childhood, through his troubled, tormented youth, to his discovery of God and his consequent total submission to the commandments of an austere, perhaps too gloomy, and

ruthless religion. There is his progress in the study and practice of literature, his work on his poems and plays, his great novel, his so-called *Brusuglio*, which, slowly, becomes peopled by the heroes of his imagination. What is disconcerting, alas, is his seeming lack of humanity in his dealings with his children: his beloved Vittoria sent to a convent school at the age of nine, his young son Enrico and Filippo to his troubles, his unforfeitable neglect of the dying Matilde. On the other hand he embraces in his arms a small girl because she resembles Vittoria, and there is ample evidence of his tender heart. One cannot escape Manzoni's charm; perhaps the most sensitive reaction to him was that of Mary Clarke, Fauriel's English lover, who said of him: "His charm is supreme; wanted to roll on the ground in front of him, like a cat in the sun."

Short of doing the same in front of Natalia Ginzburg, let me say that she has written a wonderful book. A complaint against her publisher, however, how could an experienced and cultivated house such as Einaudi bring out a book like this without including an index of names?

On the trail of fishy pleasures

Valentine Cunningham

SIMON RAVEN

September Castle
261pp. Blond and Briggs. £7.95.
0 85634 123 1

"Once upon a time there was an English gentleman called Ivan Barracough, who lived in a half-ruined tower house some two miles south of ...". That is how *September Castle* opens, and it is how, nowadays, you open a fiction that doesn't want to be taken altogether earnestly. It suggests the onset of a bit of a spoof, something fanciful, a squib. Squibs are Simon Raven's thing; they are not despicable items. When they're left off in chains they can put up quite a show. Raven's *Alms for Oblivion* series—wonderfully *louché*, a touch caddish, a mite spivvy; Anthony Powell fallen among duns, an about-to-be-cashiered Evelyn Waugh—flashes perkily along, and is in the end a much more cumulatively powerful fiction than the mere summing of its parts would suggest. Singly, too, squibs can prove not unworthily pyrotechnic. On their own, of course, they run more of a risk of fading out in damp and lonely sputters, in worried authorial protraction. Raven's *Roses of Piccadilly* was a long-drawn-out dud. For its part, and despite its conscious affiliations with *Roses of Piccadilly* (even down to the odd borrowed character), *September Castle* keeps in mind that it's only a squib; it stays short and sparky.

To be sure, *September Castle*'s plot makes an unlikely-sounding affair. A fat phrase of a private scholar called Ptolemaeus and his more indigent chum, the gentleman Ivan, are trailing the legend of a thirteenth-century Greek princess called Xanthippe. She's supposed to have met a grisly and theologically intricate end in a castle in northern France, to which she'd been ferried in a rather shady *mélange* of political and marital manoeuvrings.

Excited by the recurrent presence in the old stories of a fabulously huge, gold and jewelled Byzantine toy in the shape of an *écresse* or crayfish, a small but devoted tribe of scholars, Cambridge dons, scholars *manqués*, Greek and Yugoslav toughs, lustful maidens (dons' daughters and the like), French nobles, chaps from the French Ministry of Ancient Monuments (or some such), all armed about with shovels, mechanical diggers, firearms, deadly truth-herbs plucked on the information of ancient manuscripts from ancient Greek chapels, is hotly in pursuit of Xanthippe. Some are entranced by her memory, some by her boudoir, some by bits of each. What they expect to find in the unearthed earth of the castle, and how they interpret what does eventually confront them there, depends on what they make of the ballads, the old chronicle, the secret and juicy appendix to the chronicle, the stela, the inscriptions, the carvings with which the trail is busily and somewhat over-determiningly seeded.

Like a certain class of detective story, this novel makes a calculated appeal to readers likely to be magnetized by the trappings of scholarship. The cosy play with some tag of a dead tongue or a line of verse, the plotting for a dip into the museum curator's private cupboard, what the stela really means and how they trundle the port and how they Table: that kind of thing is abundantly on offer. Raven is more than half in love with this sort of business himself. Indeed the most feeling moments in an otherwise spiky read come when some charged instance of true *snobisme*, some rush of craving for the survival or return of a piece of *antiquité*, is suddenly plonked ponderously down in the narrative's wake. There are too few gems about, it's observed, even among the scholars; too many young women have "nagged" their way into Cambridge colleges; the cranky but civilized world of the English Marquess

is pestered by Public Noses, that of the French Marquis or the Greek islanders by hordes of guttural and offensive Germans. A potent sub-plot has the letters of Ptolemy's old college, stopped in their fishy wheeze to bring in some subversively republican new Master by the subtle wielding of an ancient statute which enjoins loyalty to Constitution and Monarch in a Head of House. "Our Lady the Queen" is the sacred toast of the Ptolemy crowd. Captain the Marquess Canteloupe is given on such occasions to crying "God Bless Her Majesty" — which is granted to be "the privilege of an officer of Horse".

More happily, though, Raven's fiercely nostalgic feel for the orthodoxies of the Old School, Call and Regiment comes generally modified by his customary relish for nonsense, farting, belching and other blasphemies. It may be true — and the case of Simon Raven invites one frequently to suppose it is — that blaspheming is a sign of the truest belief, and that expelled bounders and cads — like that character in Graham Greene's *England Made Me* who organizes in his Swedish exile the reunion dinners of the school he was expelled from — are at heart more loyal than any safe insider; but Raven does succeed, and with agreeable zest, in kicking the various Arks of his ancestral Covenant.

What appear in one light to be venerable theological mysteries show up in another as rascally tales about the ancient world's champion female wanker. Pretensions and high-mindedness are everywhere chopped and knocked. All that learning ends in an act of girlish trolling in which Xanthippe's skeleton is the grim third party. Scholarship comes down in a couple of foolish gravediggers in a B-feature hole in a creepy midnight ruin. Ptolemaeus is after all only a sad sycophant. In fact, the continuing attention to what the girls know as "throberama" and the chaps as

"getting" or "squirting" your "nuts off"; the revelations of the crusty old French aristocrats' ancient incest; the affectionately regarded rise and rise of the foul, cunning and proleyn Len; the liberally expressed filthy-mindedness of one and all, indicate Raven's extensive efforts to show that the uppity, whiter-than-white-flannelled game his class of character is playing is, well, not quite the cricket their sort would like us to believe it to be.

Raven's racily irreverent way with his scholars, officers and gentlemen is agreeably cheeky; his reflections upon his own narration are more tongue-in-cheek. It's inevitable that we should decide the Xanthippe rigmarole doesn't come to much. So Raven mounts a deft little case against the importance of climaxes. Ptolemaeus's greatest pleasure consists in deferring his orgasms. Orgasms, he tells his handy niece Jo-Jo again and again, spoil love precisely because they do make great endings. It's the drawing-out of desire that kindles affection and keeps the punter happiest. Jo-Jo absorbs the repeated lesson enough to try passing it on even to unlikely Len. So the novel's sexual practices, like the huge meals Jo-Jo spends much of the time cooking, are eked-out affairs. Postponing resolutions, they seek to devalue them. Ending, it's implied, can confer feebleness; it's time spent in the hands of a skilled manipulator that matters. "Oh, Ptolemy," exclaims Jo-Jo, warning to some particular touch of his, "you are clever. What fun it is being with you." Just being with you? A likely story. It's even a fishy one.

A likely story. It's even a fishy one. Xanthippe's trail tails away into inconsequential. But then, *September Castle* keeps celebrating precisely the pleasures of the fishy. Jo-Jo is a dab hand at cooking fish. Xanthippe is a fish out of Greek water. The trail is that crayfish. In fact the novel presents us with a whole slab-full of fishy stuff. Almost, one might say, the most rewardingly knowing bout of fishiness you're likely to come across in many a hard fictional trawl.

marvellous meaning to every event, to know intimately each tree.

"Have you ever cut down a tree?" George Swan asked the School of Arts. "A tree you've known all your life? And taken full responsibility for cutting it down?"

Tree murder is not the only crime committed in Whitey's Fall. Despite the sonorous pulp-style, the book communicates the author's great love for and fear of the Australian bush life, and in that sense this is a true ecological romance. A work of art, it is not.

The late Nicholas Tomalin once confessed that he suffered from "writer's block" whenever he was in Australia, enigmatic as it is to the point of being indescribable. At least for the time being.

Growing out of the idylls

Lindsay Duguid

BEL MOONEY

The Windsurf Boy
234pp. Cape. £7.95.
0 224 02079 X

Bel Mooney's first novel is coming with the emotional helpings induced by a middle-class upbringing the crippling retrospective view engendered by a particular mode of childhood and its illusions is not so but it is handled here with combs and originality.

The childhood in question is that of Anna Lewis, a deserted wife revisiting the family riverside on her seven-year-old son. Much of the book is taken up by memories conjured by the smells of the cottage, recollections of the idyllic family holidays punctuated by an already existing existence. The memories are in themselves unexceptional — the in front of an electric fire, the forgotten quarrels, the adventures: they are more like Proust — but in presenting them as sacred to Anna and a constant of her adult life, Mooney conveys a powerful sense of loss. Selecting details which are both evocative — a misleading snapshot, a malodorous toy — she invests them with strong emotion. (She has a similar way with language, often eloquently deploying the banal utterances of nurses, shopkeepers and so on, her characters' snobberies and sentimentalities too are precisely caught.) In the character of Anna Mooney portrays the now familiar figure of contemporary woman who is the focus for conflicting emotions. But Anna does not have a monopoly of feeling (the narrative is full of her and her mother's) the fact that she is doing what she does is not so much a matter of choice as of necessity. The reader in consequence is equally absorbed in every page she writes. (Stewart) was a genuinely strong phenomenon, locked up in love and needing sympathy and love to understand her, a fictional character needs those talents in its creator."

Architecture

STEPHEN BAYLEY. *The Albert Memorial: the monument in its social and architectural context*. 160pp. Scolar. £4.95. 0 85967 674 9. The stories of Victorian architectural competitions are always fascinating to read about, especially when the various schemes and their rival modes and iconographies, sketched against visionary cloudscapes and dwarfing the awestruck citizens, are as fully illustrated as they are in the 101 plates of Stephen Bayley's book (first published in 1981) about one of the most typical and concentrated symbolic monuments of the Victorian age. Other influential monuments and a facetiously over-written account of Prince Albert provide a background for a detailed analysis of the whole structure, its erection, and its sculptural groups, with a particularly revealing description of the podium frieze and its papyrus of painters, architects, sculptors, poets and musicians — a collocation of genius great and obscure which affords a singular record of the cultural perspectives of mid-nineteenth-century England. Interesting photographs of sketches and models for the other allegorical groups by the many sculptors involved are illuminatingly set in their place by Bayley's humorous and excitable text.

A.J.G.H.

Biography and Memoirs

CAROL ASCHER. *Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of Freedom*. 234pp. Harvester. £4.95. 0 1708 0494 6. First published in 1981 and reviewed in the TLS of December 2, 1982.

VICTORIA GLENDINNING. *Edith Sitwell: Unicorn Among Lions*. 387pp. Oxford University Press. £3.95. 0 19 281396 2. First published by Weidenfeld in 1981 and reviewed in the TLS of July 31, 1981 by John Bayley, who wrote "Victoria Glendinning is a novelist: she is absorbed by monsters and their problems. ... The reader in consequence is equally absorbed in every page she writes. (Sitwell) was a genuinely strong phenomenon, locked up in love and needing sympathy and love to understand her, a fictional character needs those talents in its creator."

ROBERT BERNARD MARTIN. *Tennyson: The Uncut Heart*. 643pp. Faber. £5.95. 0 571 11842 9. First published in 1980 by Oxford University Press and Faber. Philip Larkin concluded his review (TLS November 7, 1980) thus: "Professor Martin has tried to be fair to Tennyson, neither making fun of him nor seeing him, as his age did, as a figure out of Homer or even the Bible. It would be tempting to call this 'life of a poet' without his poems. If Professor Martin did not so explicitly deny this in his preface, one might say it is the life of a poet without something, and perhaps poetry is the most convenient shorthand for it."

RICHARD MEINERTZHAEGEN. *Kenya Diary (1902-1906)*, with a new preface by Elspeth Huxley. 347pp. Eland Books. £4.95. 0 907871 10 0. Meinertzhagen was a shrewd swiftness who helped conquer the most unwilling Kenyans for the British at the turn of the century. A nephew of Beatrice Webb but at the other end of the political spectrum, he was abrasive, clever, brave, truculent, amusing, contemptuous of nearly all the blacks he commanded or killed (they were roughly equal in number), and contemptuous too of almost as many of his fellow whites. His bracing if often extremely bloody tale is an invaluable chronicle both for the serious historian of East Africa and for the curious safari-goer passing by with an alert sense of history. Later famous for his ornithology and for his intelligence-gathering talents elsewhere, Meinertzhagen makes predictions — the likelihood, for instance, of what was later known as the Mau Mau rebellion fifty years after the fact — that are just kept in check by the forthrightly bleak, unflinching detail of the writing. Anna's gradual acceptance of change to appear entirely natural.

History
R. B. DOBSON. (Editor). *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*. 433pp. Macmillan. £7.95. (hardback) £20.00 0 333 25505 4 (hardback) 0 333 25504 6. First published in 1970 and reviewed in the TLS of November 6, 1970. This second edition contains both a new introduction by R. B. Dobson and his original introduction.

JOHN KEEGAN. *Six Armies in Normandy*. 365pp. Penguin. £3.50. 0 14 005293 3. First published by Cape in 1982 and reviewed in the TLS of June 25, 1982. The reviewer wrote: "For his part, Keegan writes with a certain brush, but in the telling of each part of this story he brings into focus matters which, however much one may have read, bring sudden illumination."

MARTIN MIDDLEBROOK. *The Kaiser's Battle*. 21 March 1918, The First Day of the German Spring Offensive. 413pp.

Paperbacks in brief

Huxley's preface as expected, though one senses that, as the leading apologist for settlerdom, she feels a shade awkward about some aspects of Meinertzhagen's cruel efficiency. He protests his innocence a little much in the affair of the Nandi Laibon, whom he killed in, confusing circumstances. This is a splendid republication.

X.S.

MARCEL PROUST. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Volume One. 1040pp. 0 14 005951 2, Volume Two. 1197pp. 0 14 005952 0, Volume Three. 1129pp. 0 14 005953 9. Penguin. £5.95 each. Translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Andrew Mayor. Revised by Terence Kilmartin.

GEORGE D. PAINTER. *Marcel Proust*. 783pp. Penguin. £5.95. 0 14 006512 1. First published by Chatto and Windus in two volumes in 1959 and 1965, reviewed in the TLS of September 17, 1958 and August 5, 1965. In a sense, Proust's theory of art recapitulates Greek mythology in human terms: Just as the Muses are the progeny of Zeus and Mnemosyne, so too — in Proust's secular terms — art is the offspring of the worldly divine and mortal memory. It is one of the great merits of George Painter's biography to present Proust's thoughts on this subject so clearly. There are times, to be sure, when Painter seems a little pedantic, a little too psychologically apologetic, a little too knowing. But his work remains a triumph of biography, unsurpassed, and probably the master *roman à clef*. It is now reprinted in one volume by Penguin to coincide with their paperback edition of Terence Kilmartin's revision of C. K. Scott Moncrieff's indubitably inspired but far from flawless translation of *À la Recherche du temps perdu*. (First published in 1981 by Chatto and Windus and reviewed in the TLS of June 12, 1981). Such a revision was long overdue, and Kilmartin has done it well. The goal of perfect translation is a worthy pursuit — it is attainable: someone may someday be moved to revise the reviewer. But he, or she, will not find much left to do.

GIORGIO VASARI. *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*. Translated by A. B. Hinds. Edited in a revised edition, with an Introduction, by William Gaunt. Volume One. 364pp. 0 460 01784 2, Volume Two. 372pp. 0 460 01785 3, Volume Three. 326pp. 0 460 01786 1, Volume Four. 344pp. 0 460 01787 X. Dent: Everyman's Library £2.95 each.

EVELYN WAUGH. *A Little Learning*. 234pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 14 006047 9. First published by Chapman and Hall in 1964 and reviewed in the TLS of September 10 that year. The reviewer quoted this observation of Waugh's: "To have been born into a world of beauty, to die amid ugliness, is the common fate of all us exiles." and continues: "In the context, 'exiles' seems to mean exiles from the past to the present. This cry, historic and yet certainly heartfelt, with its mingled tones of stem resignation and frank self-pity, seems to offer the true clue to this book, to set its continuous underlying theme."

History

R. B. DOBSON. (Editor). *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381*. 433pp. Macmillan. £7.95. (hardback) £20.00 0 333 25505 4 (hardback) 0 333 25504 6. First published in 1970 and reviewed in the TLS of November 6, 1970. This second edition contains both a new introduction by R. B. Dobson and his original introduction.

JOHN KEEGAN. *Six Armies in Normandy*. 365pp. Penguin. £3.50. 0 14 005293 3. First published by Cape in 1982 and reviewed in the TLS of June 25, 1982. The reviewer wrote: "For his part, Keegan writes with a certain brush, but in the telling of each part of this story he brings into focus matters which, however much one may have read, bring sudden illumination."

MARTIN MIDDLEBROOK. *The Kaiser's Battle*. 21 March 1918, The First Day of the German Spring Offensive. 413pp.

Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 005278 X. First published by Allen Lane in 1978. March 21, 1918 saw the start of *Operation Michael*, Germany's last-ditch attempt to win the war in the West, by breaking through Haig's front in Picardy and rolling the British Expeditionary Force northward into the sea at Ostend, before the arrival of overwhelming American reinforcements in Europe. The offensive advanced an unprecedented forty miles and inflicted a quarter of a million casualties on each side but, as Martin Middlebrook shows, it was, in retrospect, clear by the close of the first day's fighting that the decisive breakthrough had eluded Ludendorff, as it had eluded French, Joffe, Haig and Nivelle in the previous three years, and that Imperial Germany had effectively lost the war. The author's grasp of wider strategy is uncertain, but his account of the topics and development of the first day's battle (in which the concept of *blitzkrieg* received its baptism of fire) based on accounts of survivors, is illuminating and vivid.

N.

GORDON W. PRANGE. *At Dawn We Slept: The Untold Story of Pearl Harbor*. 873pp. Penguin. £7.95. 0 14 006455 9. First published in Great Britain by Michael Joseph in 1982, and reviewed by Christopher Thorne in the TLS of June 4, 1982. He wrote "Overall specialists in the field will find in the book little of major significance that is new to them, and it is difficult to feel that the nature of the work as published is commensurate with the thirty-seven years that Prange devoted to its preparation. That having been said, *At Dawn We Slept* does, nevertheless, provide the student and the general reader alike with both interesting material and sensible judgements."

JACK N. RAKOVE. *The Beginnings of National Politics: an Interpretive History of the Continental Congress*. 484pp. Johns Hopkins. £7.25. 0 8018 2864 3. Originally published in 1979.

CHARLES ROYSTER. *Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution*. 301pp. Cambridge University Press. £6.95. 0 52 27065 0. First published by Knopf in 1981.

Literary Criticism

VLADIMIR NABOKOV. *Lectures on Literature*. Edited by Fredson Bowers. 382pp. Pan. £3.95. 0 330 26973 9. NABOKOV. *Lectures on Russian Literature*. Edited by Fredson Bowers. 324pp. Pan. £3.95. 0 330 26974 7. These volumes contain Nabokov's lecture notes for courses he taught at Wellesley and Cornell in the 1940s and 1950s. *Lectures on Literature* (first published in Britain by Weidenfeld in 1980 and reviewed in the TLS of April 24, 1981), Nabokov examines his "masterpieces of European fiction" in loving, punctilious detail puzzling out the exact shape of Emma Bovary's hairstyle, bringing his entomological knowledge to bear on the species of beetle involved in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, illustrating the relationship between Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde in a series of intricate diagrams. He patiently establishes through the fastidious attention to detail the coherent uniqueness of each work. His lectures on Russian literature (first published here in 1982 and reviewed in the TLS of February 18, 1983) contain more biographical and background detail, but again he pinpoints his authors' absurdity, Turgenyev's debility, the dove-grey world of Chekhov, Dostoevsky's loathsome hysteria and Tolstoy's mastery of time. These lectures make wonderful reading, informed by Nabokov's witty, disciplined relishing in the art of fiction and in individual genius.

Penguin. £4.95. 0 14 002456 4. First published in the US by Birkhäuser in 1980 and in Britain by Harvester in 1981. Reviewed in the TLS of May 14, 1982.

RAYMOND SMULLYAN. *The Lady or the Tiger?* 203pp. Penguin. £2.50. 0 1402 2478 5. Raymond Smullyan is a distinguished and dazzlingly brilliant American logician with a talent for constructing amusing and instructive puzzles. Readers of *This Book?* will need no introduction to (or recommendation for) this present work (first published in the US by Knopf in 1982). It consists primarily of wittily presented puzzles in which an unobvious conclusion can be deduced from assumptions. As the book progresses the assumptions get more complicated and the deductions even less obvious, until the reader is, in effect, doing advanced set-theory and meta-logic. Fortunately Smullyan includes his own, invariably elegant, solutions. The book is a "must" for aspiring mathematicians, logicians and lovers of ratiocination of whatever age.

P.F.S.

Poetry

CHARLES CAUSLEY. *Collected Poems 1951-1975*. 289pp. Macmillan. £4.95. 0 333 35188 6. First published in 1975 and reviewed in the TLS of September 26 that year. The reviewer concluded "however he develops, this book stands as a tribute to his attention to an essential function of verse: the power to enchant."

Science

A. RUPERT HALL. *The Revolution in Science 1500-1750*. 373pp. Longman. £8.95. 0 582 49133 9. First published as *The Scientific Revolution in 1954*. The author has largely re-written the book "to reflect the increased maturity of studies of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century science. The comprehensive and profound, the archival depth and technical richness of recent publications are beyond comparison with what was normal before about 1960 ..."

Sociology

RICHARD CLUTTERBUCK. *The Media and Political Violence*. 191pp. Macmillan. £7.95. 0 333 34492 8. First published in 1981 and reviewed in the TLS of July 31 that year. This second edition covers the 1981 riots in Britain and Tooteth and elsewhere.

Travel

NORMAN LEWIS. *Naples '44*. 206pp. Eland Books. £3.95. 0 907871 45 3. *Naples '44* is Norman Lewis's account of his part in the "mopping up" operations undertaken by the British army in the south of Italy in the wake of the German defeat. As part of the Intelligence Corps and with a brief to round up collaborators, check on their mounds and curb black-market activities in the devastated city and its environs, Lewis notes the impossibility of carrying out any of these duties because everyone is involved in some sort of racket. Although moved by the plight of the Neapolitans, he is sufficiently detached to make the connection between the appalling sufferings of the civilian population — at the start of the book he is horrified by the state of the starving people; later he accepts such privations as commonplace — and the prevalence of superstition, crime, exploitation. His visits to villages in the surrounding area uncover an almost medieval society inhabiting the ruins of small farms and Romanesque churches, which have been wasted by the Allied bombing.

Naples '44 (which was first published by Collins in 1978 and reviewed in the TLS of February 27) is an illuminating portrait of that much-occupied city and goes far towards explaining the political atmosphere of present-day southern Italy. The book is written in diary form and one of its pleasures is the epiphany with which Lewis greets every bizarre and tragic incident during his year's stay. This edition is part of a new series of first volumes are notably well designed and produced.

E.W.

Mathematics

PHILIP J. DAVIS and REUBEN HERSH. *The Mathematical Experience*. 440pp.

ELLA MAILLART. *Forbidden Journey*. Translated by Thomas McGreevy. 312pp. Century. £4.95. 0 7126066 3. First published in Britain by Heinemann in 1937. In January 1935 Ella Maillart and Peter Fleming set out from Peking to travel overland to Kashmir via Sinkiang, a region officially closed to foreigners. To avoid checkpoints they did not take the road from Lanchow, but followed a route which hugged the China-Tibet border and took them through the wastelands of Koko Nor, Tsaidam and Takla Makan. Fleming stoically endures their sufferings; Maillart almost masochistically embraces them. All the same, one feels for them, with their diet of *tsamba* or *mien*, their lumbago and sunburn, their spavined mounts and half-witted drivers (although animal lovers will perhaps find their sympathies monopolized by the plight of the camels, horses and donkeys). Maillart's prose style, which is not always well served by her translator, is not as distinguished as Fleming's, but still conveys the spirit of place admirably.

K.A.M.C.C.

GAVIN MAXWELL. *A Reed Shaken by the Wind*. 224pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 009510 1

WILFRED THESIGER. *The Marsh Arabs*. 233pp. Penguin. £2.95. 0 14 000512 8. First published by Longmans in 1964, and reviewed in the TLS of June 11, 1964. Wilfred Thesiger visited the marshes of southern Iraq yearly from 1931-58. In 1956 he was accompanied there by Gavin Maxwell, and they travelled together between the reedbeds from settlement to settlement in the narrow, elegant, high-proved *tarads*. In addition to reprinting Thesiger's classic *The Marsh Arabs* for the fourth time, Penguin have added Maxwell's account of his journey to their travel library. (First published in 1981 by Longmans in 1957 and reviewed in the TLS of December 6, 1957.) The admirably — Maxwell's each other linguistically related, charmingly more open; Thesiger's intensely serious, curiously formal, slightly archaic in style, haunted by anticipatory nostalgia for a way of life threatened with disappearance — a boy's voice singing somewhere in the dark ... the silliness of a world that never knew an engine."

G.S.

FRANCIS STEEMULLER (Editor and Translator). *Flaubert in Egypt. A Sensibility on Tour*. 232pp. Michael Heag. PO Box 369, London NW3 4EL. £5.95. 0 902743 27 9. The selection and translation was first published by Bodley Head in 1972 and reviewed in the TLS of September 29 of that year. In 1849, at the age of 27, Flaubert embarked on a long tour of the "Orient" (as the Near and Middle East were then called). His companion was Maxime Du Camp, whose main purpose in going to Egypt was to photograph the monuments, but who also wrote an account of their journey in *Le Nil, Égypte et Nubie*. This, Flaubert's travel notes, and his letters to Louis Bouilhet (his quiet unpublished post of slender means) are the main sources for the selection. With occasional explanatory or bridging passages from the editor they make an extremely interesting narrative. Flaubert had a deep and lively fascination with the life there. He describes in lascivious detail his frequent encounters with prostitutes, turns an unflinching gaze on the disease, investigates religious customs and their origins and makes no secret of his boredom with ancient monuments and the arduous and "taking process" of his photographing them. In his letters he omits details of the seams and concentrates on re-assuring her about his health and the number of woollen garments he wears to protect him from the heat.

M.F.

Correction: On the "Paperbacks in brief" page of March 18, 1983, it was wrongly stated that *Messieurs Madness* by Andrew T. Scoll had been reviewed in the TLS of January 8, 1982. It was in fact his *Madness, Madness and Madmen: The Social History of Psychiatry in the Victorian Era* which was reviewed in that issue.

The wisdom of Whitey's Fall

Jill Neville

RODNEY HALL

Just Relations
520pp. Allen Lane. £8.95.
0 7159 1355 2

The Great Australian Novel (like its American equivalent) has always loomed challengingly. It is the Ayers Rock in the dead centre of the Antipodean imagination, for what is a country without heroes, or indeed without its Genius?

Xavier Herbert tried it with *Capricornia* and *Poorfella My Country*, both swearing with aborigines and folklore. *Summer Time Ends* by John Hargreaves, a curiosity written in atomized prose when many Australian writers were in thrall to James Joyce, can still be picked up in second-hand bookshops. More recently Patrick White seemed to achieve it in *Voss*. But in all these works one is aware of the solemnity of purpose with which the writers set about their task — one can almost hear the self-important whispering of the Muse's wings above the desk.

But what they also have in common is a heady sense of the country itself. It's overwhelming glamour. Rodney Hall has too, but his 500-page *Just Relations*, described in the local press as "a tapestry", a "literary event" and "hall of wisdom", is marked by the same old bloatedness. It is a mess of the verbal excesses, but without the sophistication of Cut, by half, it would have been a good book.

It is set in a small mountain hamlet, cunningly called Whitey's Fall, deserted by many after the gold-rush, to remain a ghost-town "progress" indeed almost a ghost-town — perhaps the inhabitants are truly ghosts? An ancient incestuous brother and sister, both of remarkable intellect, run the general store where "rubber gloves, gaudy and hopelessly praline one another's sorrows". If that isn't pretentious enough try:

the shop muttered, disgruntled, the crack in its timber walls opening wider so that more convoluted vines burst in from outside and cast garlands of vulgar flowers among the bins of sugar where they trembled, listening, purple with concentration.

Jeez, he mutters swallowed the dictionary, as they say in those parts. But peel back these florid layers of old-fashioned school-essay poetry and you have a freshly perceived love affair between Vivien, a thirty-four-year-old housewife, and nineteen-year-old Billy, who is first embarrassed by the age-gap, then overwhelmed by its irrelevance.

The author's deeper theme is staid. Vivien has been sent home to the village by an aunt who ruined off to England long ago. She is, as it were, her aunt's substitute, a consolation

prize to the village. A deserted lover is rekindled, are old dreams of gold nuggets. Each day the ancient inhabitants meet in the Mountain Hotel for a session in Remembering. There's a haze of innocence over Whitey's Fall, which like *Liesegang* by Dylan Thomas's *Under Milk Wood* is agreeably sentimentalized, despite its quota of the mean and the malevolent who do their usual work of advancing the plot.

The book is full of semi-magical happenings, with a queer sense of symbolism about somewhere. A woman gives birth at sixty-two; the perpetual mountain wind drops when the baddies push through their plans for a highway to connect this Shangri-La with the outside world.

But the point is, the ancients have been around long enough to give

Yesterday's tribe and today's

Nicholas Shakespeare

DAVID MARTIN

The Crying Heart Tattoo
330pp. Balmora Books. 7.95.
0 7278 3010 4

According to Scott Fitzgerald, when the Dutch sailors spotted the fresh green breast of the New World they confronted something "commensurate with man's capacity for wonder". It was a vision of perfection, but to live in it they needed to destroy it. From a desire to express this paradox within a single statement evolves the peculiar wisecracking humour of the best American writers — a humour which makes tolerable the disintegration and loss of "the last and greatest of all human dreams".